

New Approach Oregon
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I represent New Approach Oregon, a coalition of local and national advocates that support sensible marijuana law reform and have come together to end cannabis prohibition in Oregon. We have filed an initiative to help ensure that Oregon voters are able to vote on a marijuana legalization measure that will meet the guidelines laid out by the federal government while creating jobs and generating revenue for the state. We are appreciative that many within the Oregon Legislature are seriously considering the regulation and taxation of marijuana.

Like alcohol prohibition before it, marijuana prohibition has proven to be too costly and ultimately counter productive. Instead of wasting tax payer dollars and law enforcement resources on enforcing prohibition, Oregon would be better off regulating and taxing marijuana similar to how we tax and regulate the beer and wine industries.

Our discussions with stakeholders and Oregonians have made it clear that, when it comes to voting on a legalization measure, the details count. While we understand the political realities of passing a referral in any session, let alone a shortened session, we have concerns about the viability of asking voters to approve the concept of legalization without giving them a clear understanding of the robust and accountable mechanisms of regulation, taxation and protection for young people and communities. As I have stated in previous hearings, we urge the Oregon Legislature to consider the New Approach measure as a foundation for the regulatory framework of any proposal that you may consider as we have worked hard to seek input from stakeholders across the political spectrum to develop sensible regulations that will take marijuana out of the black market and into a controlled, tightly regulated system.

Marijuana would be taxed at \$35 per ounce sold, a rate to ensure that enough money is raised to effectively regulate cannabis commerce, while also generating new revenue for important state programs. However, the marijuana isn't taxed at such a rate as to prevent the regulated market from competing with the black market. Educational programs will receive 40% of the revenue; 25% to mental health and substance abuse treatment; 15% to state police, with 10% going to both counties and cities, designated for local law enforcement.

Under New Approach Oregon's initiative, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) will license and regulate the state's marijuana industry. Usage of marijuana by minors under 21 years of age will still be illegal and the OLCC will be tasked with ensuring that retail outlets don't provide marijuana to underage minors. Drug dealers don't check for ID, but retail outlets regulated, inspected, and audited by the OLCC do and will. Additionally, marijuana may not be distributed within 1,000 feet from schools, public use is prohibited, driving under the influence laws remain intact and employers are still free to implement Drug Free Workplace policies. Our initiative prohibits using marijuana while driving and mandates that the OLCC examine existing studies, and if necessary, help fund new studies, to determine whether additional driving laws are needed. Further, the OLCC is also empowered to regulate advertising and to implement more rules and regulations as needed.

It is time to take a new approach on marijuana and replace prohibition with a sensible regulatory and taxation framework with strict controls. Please consider utilizing New Approach Oregon's proposal as a regulatory framework for a sensible legalization model.

Thank you,
Anthony Johnson
Director, New Approach Oregon
