



**Public Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 302**

Madame Co-chairs and members of the Joint Committee on Marijuana Legalization:

Thank you for helping usher in an era of smart-on-crime policies that have benefited your constituents and our entire state. Great work has already been done to remove harmful criminal penalties that have disproportionately hurt people of color and citizens battling through poverty.

Whether you have the goal of making Oregon a model for the rest of the country or not, we are. The expungement provision passed by the Oregon Legislature set the table for California to enact a similar provision last November and was the inspiration for a proposed federal bill. We can expect more states to follow Oregon's lead in both legalizing cannabis and retroactively allowing the expungement of old marijuana offenses in the coming years, greatly benefitting many people's lives. We hope that you are as proud of this important work as we are.

Senate Bill 302 has some good provisions that continue Oregon's trend of being smart-on-crime, mainly removing marijuana from the list of controlled substances. This is a policy that is long overdue and will hopefully be copied by other states, and eventually, the federal government. Once again, Oregon is helping lead the way.

However SB 302 provides for some unnecessary criminal penalties that New Approach Oregon opposes. We have moved forward positively on cannabis laws and there is no reason to move back towards more harmful felonies. Oregonians voted to regulate marijuana like alcohol and alcohol offenses do not include a wide array of felonies.

Marijuana felonies that can include prison time and have to be worn like a scarlet letter, depriving nonviolent people of many employment and housing opportunities, are not beneficial to our society. If marijuana offenders can't get a job they will only be pushed deeper into criminal behavior and everyday Oregonians will foot the bill and suffer the consequences.

While there could potentially be a middle ground on punishing repeat offenders, Class A misdemeanors are adequate when minors and public safety aren't involved. On that end, we don't oppose felonizing the sale of marijuana to minors under the age of 18 and the felony crime of arson that occurs from unlicensed extraction explosions.

Senate Bill 302 has the potential to continue our movement in the right direction on cannabis policies. We urge you to remove unnecessary penalties from the bill and thank you for the opportunity to discuss the issue with you further.

Respectfully,

Anthony Johnson  
Director, New Approach Oregon