



**TO: Governor Scott Walker  
Speaker Robin Vos  
Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald**  
**FROM: State Representative Melissa Sargent**  
**DATE: July 13, 2017**  
**RE: Finding a Solution to Wisconsin's Budget Problem**

I am writing today to respectfully ask for your consideration on an issue I have been working on the last two biennia. As you are all well aware, Wisconsin is in the midst of a serious budget crisis. We have a billion-dollar budget deficit, an insolvent transportation fund, and are facing significant cuts to some of our state's most important programs. It is also no secret that there continues to be very public disagreement between the three of you about the best plan to address the budget crisis facing our state. Our budget was due almost two weeks ago, and yet we are no closer to having a finalized budget, and the Joint Finance Committee—which has not met in almost a month—currently has no future meetings scheduled.

In light of this, I wanted to offer a solution that I noted has not yet been suggested that would present a new, innovative approach to creating jobs, increasing revenue without raising taxes, and eliminating our budget deficit: I am introducing a bill to legalize marijuana this morning in the Legislature, and I am hopeful that you might give it careful consideration as a potential solution to Wisconsin's budget crisis.

The economic impacts in states which have legalized marijuana have been staggering: states such as Colorado have seen a \$2.4 billion economic impact in their state with more than 18,000 jobs created, billions of dollars in sales, and projections that marijuana will be the state's largest excise revenue source by 2020. It is also estimated that marijuana sales will surpass \$22 billion in the next three years. Economic analyses detailing the economic prosperity occurring in states that have legalized marijuana are compelling, and certainly deserve your full review and consideration as an alternative to the suggestions you have already entertained.

I know we have different letters behind our names, and I also know there are plenty of issues on which we will likely never agree, but I am hopeful that given our state's dire financial situation, and the lack of any realistic, agreeable solutions being offered by anyone else, that you will look past the 'D' next to my name long enough to give marijuana legalization the earnest review and consideration Wisconsin deserves. The longer we go without a budget or any real solutions to our budget crisis, and the more it becomes unjustifiable not to legalize marijuana in Wisconsin.

I am more than happy to provide additional information or resources on this topic, and would look forward to any opportunity to discuss this in further detail. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with any further questions or concerns. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Respectfully,

Melissa Sargent  
State Representative  
48<sup>th</sup> Assembly District