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STATE SENATOR

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## Senator Agard Supports Governor Evers' Budget Provision to Legalize and Tax Marijuana in Wisconsin

MADISON - Today, Governor Evers announced that he will include the legalization of marijuana for those over 21 in Wisconsin in his 2021-23 biennial state budget. Senator Melissa Agard (D-Madison) has been a champion for legalization since 2013, and released the following statement on the governor's announcement:

"The most dangerous thing about cannabis in Wisconsin is that it is illegal. This is the right time to legalize and tax marijuana use in Wisconsin like we already do with alcohol. I am thrilled that Governor Evers' has included this measure in his budget," Sen. Agard stated. "At a time when we need to grow additional state revenue, this is the fiscally responsible decision for Wisconsin. At a time when we need to address our egregious racial disparities, this is the moral decision for Wisconsin. And at a time when our agricultural community needs a boost, this is the right statewide decision for Wisconsin."

Support for marijuana legalization has been steadily increasing in Wisconsin and across the nation:

- In 2019, a Marquette University Law Poll found that nearly 60 percent of Wisconsinites support the legalization of marijuana.
- Senator Agard introduced the first ever full legalization bill in Wisconsin in 2013. Since then, the number of cosponsors has more than tripled.

"I've often said it's not a matter of if Wisconsin legalizes, it's a matter of when. Prohibition does not work. This budget provision is about the prosperity, safety, and equity of all of our communities- communities of color who have been disproportionately impacted by decades-old racist policies, or our rural communities who need the additional sparsity aid Governor Evers has wisely included in this budget provision. As the GOP has left these communities behind, this budget proposal invests in our agricultural and entrepreneurial heritage with a Wisconsin only grower provision. Cannabis legalization will level the playing field and will start the process of undoing the wrongs done to Black and Brown Wisconsinites who have been arrested at wildly disproportionate rates, and providing our farmers with a tool to support their families. This is good for all of Wisconsin. Period."

"During a global pandemic, this is a pragmatic, safe way to raise state revenues, refocus our priorities, and plant seeds in Wisconsin's future. I'm grateful that the governor understands the importance of this by including full legalization in his state budget. I look forward to working with him to continue moving this issue forward," Sen. Agard concluded.

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