

## LRB-0154 Media Quotes

“At the end of the day, people are using marijuana in our communities. By embracing this piece of legislation we're actually trying to make our state a safer place. The most dangerous thing about marijuana in Wisconsin is that it's illegal.” – *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

“This solution is not just about legalizing marijuana; it is about legalizing opportunity. Legalizing marijuana is about creating family sustaining jobs, increasing revenue and economic opportunity, while addressing massive racial disparities. The benefits are too great to ignore.” – *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

“In referenda across the state, a majority of voters favored legalizing adult use of marijuana. Given the widespread public support for this legislation, it is incumbent upon legislators on both sides of the aisle to keep the conversation going about this issue.” – *Senator Latonya Johnson (D-Milwaukee)*

“From the potential millions in projected state revenue growth, to the thousands of new jobs that could be created through the development of new industries, to addressing the huge costs to both the individual and taxpayers for unnecessarily incarcerating citizens on marijuana charges – this proposal makes sense for Wisconsin. I am proud to help lead the effort to end the prohibition of marijuana in our state.”—  
*Representative Tod Ohnstad (D-Kenosha)*

### Regarding Public Support

“People across the state of Wisconsin are far ahead of policymakers when it comes to this piece of legislation. It is time the people of Wisconsin hold their elected officials accountable and make sure that they are hearing the voices of their constituents.” – *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

“It was amazing how many different people would come to my listening sessions, meet me in my office, join me for office hours, stop me in the grocery store, just in my everyday life and share stories about how the prohibition of marijuana in the state of Wisconsin has negatively impacted them or someone that they love.” – *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

“The people of Wisconsin have said loud and clear that the prohibition of marijuana is not working— as the recent November election showed, people across the state are overwhelmingly in support of legalization. It is past time for the Legislature to hear the voices of their bosses, the people of Wisconsin.” – *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

“The legalization of marijuana is mainstream, with Thirty-Three states around the country—including ten states that have fully legalized, hundreds of thousands of people are reaping the benefits of cannabis reform. Many states, including neighboring Minnesota and Illinois, are moving towards legalizing recreational marijuana, and other neighbors like Michigan have already done so. The question is not if we will fully legalize marijuana in Wisconsin, but when.” – *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

“Here in Wisconsin, nearly two out of three Wisconsinites believe that all marijuana sales should be taxed and regulated like alcohol sales, and that number grows stronger every year. With this increased support for full legalization, it is clear that Wisconsinites are ready for truly pragmatic and common sense action.”  
– *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

“Wisconsinites also largely support the full legalization of marijuana, and want to see a pragmatic approach that provides real relief for our friends and neighbors across our state. We must continue to work towards a path that comprehensively ends this prohibition, brings Wisconsin’s out of date cannabis policies up to speed with our neighboring states, and rectifies the damages that have been done to our communities.” – *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

## **Regarding Criminal Justice**

“People used to describe marijuana as a Gateway drug. And unfortunately it is – because of the unequal way in which marijuana laws are enforced, for black and brown people it’s a gateway into the criminal justice system, it’s a gateway to jail, and it’s a gateway to prison – and that’s wrong.”—*Craig Johnson (President of the Wisconsin Justice Initiative)*

“While use of cannabis is roughly equal between white individuals and people of color, nationwide black people are nearly 4 times as likely to be prosecuted for a cannabis related offense than our Caucasian counterparts. In the great state of Wisconsin that number balloons to 6 times as likely.” –*Alan Robinson (Cannabis advocate, Executive Director Wisconsin NORML)*

“Too many lives and communities have been damaged by out of date and backwards cannabis policies—we can take important steps in rectifying these damages by creating a pathway towards full legalization.”  
– *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

“I came to realize that marijuana laws were needlessly drawing more people into the criminal justice system and contributing to racial disparities. It became really clear to me that I needed to stand up and do something about this, and I started working on the bill then.” – *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

“Wisconsin is one of the worst states our country when it comes to blatant racial disparities, and our policy-makers are not taking it serious enough. We know that people of black or brown skin are much more likely to be addressed and harassed by police for simple possession of a small amount of a plant. We must do better to address this social injustice, and ensure equity for marginalized individuals within our community.” – *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

## **Regarding Economic Benefits**

“The statewide legalization of marijuana provides a path forward for those of us used to coming into the family home with dirty hands and beat-up boots, for those of us accustomed to working before the sun comes up and long after the moon has risen. It provides a new livelihood for farmers here, just as it did for those in Michigan, Colorado, and eight other states.”—*Bob Daggett (Farmer, Owner of Bonita Naturals & Snow Crest Christmas Trees)*

“Legalizing marijuana in the state of Wisconsin, would create more jobs, more tax revenue, and more economic development and stimulus than what it is that this Foxconn boondoggle will ever bring the state Wisconsin.” – *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

“As of today, each stop a police officer makes for simple marijuana possession costs taxpayers \$425, on average.” – *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

“One of the things I heard from some folks the first time I put the bill out is we want to see what happens in Colorado and a few of these other states and make sure the bottom doesn’t fall out. We haven’t seen the bottom fall out in those communities. In fact, we’ve seen a lot of positive impacts from legalizing and we can point to that. I’m hopeful that we can bring these benefits to Wisconsin.” – *Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison)*

### **Regarding Healthy Communities**

"Cannabis criminalization laws are not effective and negatively impact public health. Arrests can have lifelong negative effects in one's ability to access housing, employment, and education. These impacts can be especially significant for people of color given the significant disparities in the enforcement of the laws. We need policies that start to address Wisconsin's significant health disparities, and cannabis legalization is one of the ways to achieve this." — *Dr. Angela Janis (Director of Psychiatry, University Health Services; Chief Medical Officer, Leafline Labs)*

“As a small business owner, I provide a safe place for people to come and share their symptoms and I can recommend CBD to them. I see people suffering with cancer, Parkinson’s, dementia, seizures, and anxiety, and I cannot help them to the level I could if THC was legal. I do what I can with CBD, but we need to do better. Medical professionals are feeling the pressure to reduce their opioid prescriptions, yet at the same time there are no effective alternatives provided. While legalizing marijuana for medical use is necessary, making it accessible to all is needed.” — *Sarah Fabry (RN, Co-Owner of Apotheke Wellness)*