

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senator Agard Sends Letter to JFC Co-Chairs in Support of Keeping Legalization of Marijuana in State Budget

MADISON- Today, Senator Melissa Agard (D-Madison) sent a letter to the Joint Committee on Finance co-chairs in support of keeping the legalization and taxation of medical and recreational marijuana in the state budget. The letter encouraged them to look at the positive economic benefits of legalizing and taxing marijuana like we already do with alcohol. Senator Agard released this statement regarding the letter:

“Legalizing marijuana for legal and recreational use has benefits for our state economically, medically, as well as a starting point to address Wisconsin’s shameful racial disparities. With the potential to generate \$165.8 million dollars for the state in the first fiscal year, it is common sense to keep this provision in the state budget. We are losing millions of tax dollars by not legalizing cannabis - Wisconsinites are flocking to our neighboring states to spend their money, when they could be spending it here.

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.

“Wisconsinites are suffering because of decades-old, racist drug policies that have been affecting communities of color at disproportionate rates. This provision starts to address the disparities that have been created by our outdated criminal justice system.

“Additionally, this provides needed relief to thousands of Wisconsinites who need access to the medicinal benefits of cannabis. No one should be considered a felon for accessing medicine they need. It is long past time Wisconsin legalizes cannabis to provide relief to our friends and neighbors. And finally, our agricultural communities have been hit hard by the COVID pandemic. Legalizing marijuana will act as an economic development measure for those in rural parts of the state. I will continue working tirelessly in my efforts, and I invite all Wisconsinites to join me in the push to legalize opportunity in our state.”

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