



MELISSA AGARD
STATE SENATOR

Senator Howard Marklein
Joint Finance Committee Co-Chair
Room 316 East
Wisconsin State Capitol

Representative Mark Born
Joint Finance Committee Co-Chair
Room 308 East
Wisconsin State Capitol

DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY

March 29, 2021

Dear Co-Chair Marklein and Co-Chair Born:

Today, I respectfully present to you a petition signed by over 2,500 Wisconsinites voicing their support for legalizing recreational and medicinal cannabis for those over the age of 21 and taxing it like alcohol in Wisconsin. The will of the people as it pertains to cannabis has been denied for far too long, and it is past time that we as elected officials listen to our constituents. I implore you to keep the provision to legalize recreational and medicinal cannabis and tax it like alcohol in Governor Evers' proposed state budget.

In the [most recent Marquette Law School poll](#), 83 percent of Wisconsinites indicated their support for legal medicinal cannabis and nearly 60 percent indicated their support for legal recreational cannabis. This substantial majority cannot be ignored, and Wisconsin can no longer remain an island of prohibition while our neighbors in Michigan, Illinois, and Minnesota generate much-needed tax revenue from legal cannabis.

Wisconsin's economy is losing out due to our continued prohibition of cannabis. Needed revenue is leaving our state and going to our neighbors who have rightly legalized cannabis. In the first six months since legalizing cannabis on January 1, 2020, the state of Illinois has garnered over \$56 million from taxing legal cannabis. The bottom line is Wisconsin would benefit from the projected \$165 million in annual revenue that legalization would bring to our state, in addition to the billions of dollars in economic stimulus this industry would create. This is a key provision in the governor's budget that would increase revenue for our state as we come out of a global pandemic.

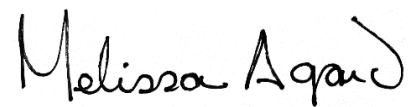
Governor Evers' proposal would also reinvest nearly \$80 million of the funds generated by taxing marijuana in communities across the state through a Community Reinvestment Fund and sparsity aid to support local rural schools. As you both know, we need to do all we can to support our rural communities and bolster opportunity whenever possible.

Wisconsinites understand that prohibition does not work. From the majority who indicated their support in the Marquette Law School poll to the thousands of Wisconsinites who voiced their support on our online petition, the will of the people has made it clear that it is past time to legalize cannabis and tax it like alcohol in the state of Wisconsin.

My fellow Wisconsinites and I ask you now to keep Governor Evers' state budget provision to legalize and tax recreational and medicinal cannabis like we already do alcohol. Every session we refuse to legalize marijuana is a session, we lose out to our midwestern states in economic prosperity. Now more than ever, it is imperative that we do the right thing as state legislators in order to represent the interests of those who elected us.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Agard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melissa Agard
State Senator
16th Senate District