

# LT. GOVERNOR ZUCKERMAN

DECEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER

Over the past year many of you have reached out to share your thoughts regarding cannabis reform. Your different perspectives and ideas have helped shape the continuing discussion. The legislature is poised to pass [H.511](#), legalizing and allowing for a few homegrown plants, early next year. In mid-January the Governor's Commission will report on their research and findings. **I am hopeful Vermont will pass legislation to both legalize and regulate cannabis this legislative session.**

I understand this is a complex issue. I heard from those who both support and oppose legalization and regulation. I've supported medicinal usage, legalization and regulation for several decades and want to share some reasons and links to recent research and data.

1. **We must reduce youth access.** The current system has been unable to achieve this. Vermont youth use rates continue to climb and are well above the national average. A study release just last week, [Following marijuana legalization, teen drug use is down in Colorado](#) shows promise that regulation can address this. Drug dealers do not check ID. If we create a system of regulated sales, and require ID that proves you are 21 to enter the store as Colorado does, evidence shows we will begin to make it more difficult for teens to access cannabis.
2. **We can improve highway safety.** We currently have drivers impaired on a variety of substances, none of them safe, on our roads. Distracted driving is also a problem. Additional highway safety officers can help improve the overall safety of our roads; revenue captured by regulation of cannabis could pay for this. In addition, marijuana may help reduce the number of drivers using alcohol or opioids, substances much more dangerous to public safety, as addressed in the new studies below.

[Medical Marijuana took a bite out of alcohol sales](#) shows that alcoholic beverage sales fell by 15% following the introduction of medical marijuana laws, "Because experts generally agree that, on balance, alcohol use is more harmful to individuals and society than marijuana use, [this would represent a significant public health benefit of marijuana legalization.](#)"

[Study of Fatal Car Accidents Shows Medical Marijuana May Help Curb Opioid Use](#) was conducted at Columbia University's School of Public Health and found "there were fewer drivers

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**January 1, 2018**

New Year's Day

**January 3, 2018**

[10:00AM](#) - Legislature

Reconvenes

[10:30AM](#) - Presentation of

Senate Sexual Harassment

Policy. State House, Senate

Chamber, Montpelier

**January 4, 2018**

[7:00AM](#) - Live radio with Charlie,

Ernie & Lisa. AM 620 WVMT

[1:30PM](#) - State of the State

Address.

State House, House Chamber

[4:30PM](#) - VTDigger Open House.

26 State Street, Montpelier

**January 5, 2018**

[8:30-10:00AM](#) - "**Coffee with**

**Constituents.**" All are welcome

to join the Lt. Governor in his

office in the State House. **This**

**event will take place weekly**

**until mid-May.**

**January 8, 2018**

[12:15PM](#) - Lunch with Montpelier

Rotary. Capitol Plaza, Montpelier

**January 9, 2018**

**Cannabis in the Capitol**

**Advocacy & Education Day**

**For a complete list of events**

**please visit the calendar on**

**our website:**

**LTGov.vermont.gov**

killed in car crashes who tested positive for opioids in states with medical marijuana laws than before the laws went into effect.”

3. **Cannabis can provide much needed revenue.** Prohibition has failed to curb use, wasted public resources, and sent an incredible number of people into the criminal justice system. By bringing the current annual \$100-200 million Vermont cannabis market above board and taxing it we can bring in revenue that could be allocated to education, prevention and treatment; additional highway safety and drug recognition officers; an endowment for higher education for Vermonters; and an endowment for future Vermont economic development.

In May, The Tax Foundation released a report, Marijuana Legalization and Taxes: Federal Revenue Impact, showing tax collections in both Colorado and Washington have exceeded estimates and “a mature marijuana industry could generate up to \$28 billion in tax revenues for federal, state, and local governments, including \$7 billion in federal revenue: \$5.5 billion from business taxes and \$1.5 billion from income and payroll taxes.” **It is important to remember that society is currently paying for all costs related to cannabis but collecting none of the revenue associated with it to help offset them.**

Legalization of cannabis would be the greatest economic development opportunity we have seen in at least a decade. In addition to the revenue collected by regulation, Vermont would see increased tourism and specialty markets, which would also bring increased revenue and bolster our economy.

4. **Legalization can help address racial injustice.** According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) “Blacks are 3.73 times more likely than whites to be arrested for marijuana” despite roughly equal usage rates. Moreover, 52% of all drug arrests are for marijuana and 88% of those are simply for having small amounts of pot. We are creating unnecessary obstacles to higher education, employment, and productive contributions to our society and ruining the lives of thousands for a substance with significantly less public threat than alcohol.

To continue our work dismantling myths, broadening the conversation, and creating connections around cannabis I hope you will join me on January 9<sup>th</sup> for ***Cannabis in the Capitol Advocacy and Education Day***. The event will start with an advocacy training at 10:00 where you can learn more about the issue, working with legislators, and how the State House operates. At noon we will hold a press conference focusing on legislation, criminal justice, and economic issues around cannabis. From 4-7 there will be a Cannabis Fair in the State House cafeteria where you can learn more about businesses involved in the cannabis (CBD and medical) and hemp arena, see product packaging, hear from medical marijuana patients and more.

I look forward to receiving your thoughts, other data, concerns, or support as we move forward with this important issue and hope to see you in Montpelier on January 9<sup>th</sup>.



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