

**SB692 - Cannabis: Legalization and Regulation (Cannabis Legalization and Reparations for the War on Drugs Act)**

**March 3, 2022 – Senate Finance and Budget and Taxation Committees**

**FAVORABLE**

Dear Members of the Senate Finance and Budget and Taxation Committees;

As Chair of The National Trauma Education and Policy Board, it's my privilege to discuss the importance of the above bill. The war on drugs and caused immense unnecessary tax payer dollar expenditure on incarcerating people who have been traumatized and re-traumatized by the system as well as those looking for emotional and physical pain relief as a result of other types of traumas in life. Cannabis is showing in countless studies to be so much more effective and healthier than various other prescription medications.

As someone who has personally worked deep in drug and alcohol counseling, jail/prison diversion, and having managed several programs (Trenton, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, DC), I've witnessed countless times where an individual is trying to get help for addiction and seeking effective services to turn one's life around, only to be arrested and pulled into jail, preventing treatment from occurring. We have all learned by now that there is almost nothing "correctional" in the correctional system. The correctional system causes people to revert back to a childlike state and reverses the help the person may have been receiving from effective service provision in the community. I've also personally seen the relief people have experienced from simply coming off of opiate addiction and using cannabis for pain management, allowing them to live much more productive and healthy lives.

This bill is incredibly important and should be passed. I also would like to point out that drug treatment programs like what is provided by Empowerment Behavioral Therapeutic Services is an incredibly effective follow-up to ensure people get the treatment needed to be successful in their current and future endeavors in life. Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

Best Regards,

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