

Marijuana Decriminalization Bill Filed in Michigan Legislature

Scheduling contradiction can not stand; 'The John Sinclair Act' supporters include a unique mixture of cannabis business, advocacy and legislative champions

LANSING, MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES, March 4, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Marijuana, or cannabis, currently is legal for adults 21 and over to purchase, possess, cultivate, trade and consume in Michigan. It is also listed as a Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 drug on the state's list of controlled substances, and that contradiction has to end, insist sponsors and supporters of a newly introduced bill.



Rep. Yousef Rabhi filing HB5877

The legislation, [HB5877](#), is sponsored by Rep. Yousef Rabhi, D-Ann Arbor, and carries nine co-sponsors. "Yesterday, I introduced what I'm calling the "John Sinclair Act" (HB 5877) to fully de-schedule cannabis from the list of scheduled substances. There is no good reason for us to keep criminalizing a plant that is legal in our state," said the Representative.

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As a Schedule 1 substance, cannabis is treated as a drug with huge potential for harm and no known medical uses. Medicinal cannabis, as a Schedule 2 drug, is still associated with high rates of abuse and very limited medicinal use. HB5877 was introduced this week in Michigan's House of Representatives and would remove cannabis from the List, effectively decriminalizing cannabis in Michigan and making complete the arc of legalization. "Michigan voters chose to legalize cannabis in 2018 but that work is not done until the herbal plant is decriminalized and removed from the list of banned and restricted substances," said Jamie Lowell, who sits on the Board of Michigan's

Americans for Safe Access chapter and is also employed in the regulated market as Director of Advocacy and Social Equity at The Botanical Company.

Support for the descheduling and decriminalization of cannabis comes from a unique melding of advocacy and industry. The Michigan Cannabis Industry Association (MiCIA), the state's largest cannabis industry trade association at more than 350 corporate members, supports the bill. State chapters of national cannabis rights organizations, including ASA and NORML of Michigan support the bill. In-state advocacy groups have rallied around the common-sense legislation, including the Cannabis Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party, the Michigan Cannabis Freedom Coalition, and others.

"Cannabis being on the list of controlled substances is the primary reason for tax inequality in the cannabis industry," said Robin Schneider, Executive Director of the MiCIA. "This legislation gives better legal protection to consumers and is the logical first step toward fixing the competitive disadvantage our cannabis industry companies face every day."

This unresolved issue has fostered discrimination against Michigan citizens for their choice to use legal cannabis. "It is time to end the contradiction," said Zahra Abbas, Cannabis Caucus Chair and Board Secretary of NORML. "Schedule 1 is used to justify denying employment opportunities, to refuse college admissions and to continue discrimination against legal cannabis users. That should not happen in a state where cannabis is legal both medically and for adults 21 and over."

Advocacy, industry, legislators and interest groups in support of the legislation include:

Rep. Yousef Rabhi
Rep. Shri Thanedar
Rep. Mary Cavanagh
Rep. Tim Sneller
Rep. Cynthia Johnson
Rep. Lori Stone
Rep. Karen Whitsett
Rep. Tenisha Yancey
Rep. Abraham Aiyash
Sen. Jeff Irwin
Black and Brown Cannabis Guild
Black Cannabis Access
Cannabis Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party
Clean Smoke Community Investment Project
Decriminalize Nature- Michigan
Michigan ASA
Michigan Cannabis Business Development Group
Michigan Cannabis Freedom Coalition

Michigan Legislative Cannabis Caucus
More Than Hope
NORML of Michigan
Redemption Cannabis
Students for Sensible Drug Policy
The Botanical Company
The Michigan Cannabis Industry Association
The Great Lakes Expungement Network
Young Democrats of the Michigan Democratic Party

All the named supporters urge bipartisan support and swift passage for the bill. The bill has been assigned to the House Regulatory Reform Committee and has not yet been assigned a date for first reading.

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