

Resolution
**Endorse and Support the Passage of Initiative Measure No. 502
To Legalize, Tax, and Regulate Marijuana for Adults 21 and Over**

WHEREAS thousands of Washington adults are arrested, prosecuted, and convicted for simple marijuana possession each year, wasting millions of dollars in police, court, and jail resources that could be redirected to more important public safety priorities;

WHEREAS marijuana is Washington's second biggest cash crop and could generate hundreds of millions of dollars in new tax revenues for the state if brought out of the illicit market, regulated, produced by licensed Washington businesses, and taxed;

WHEREAS legalizing marijuana and bringing it under regulatory control would have a significant impact on the illicit profits supporting violent criminal organizations;

WHEREAS simple marijuana-possession charges now account for fully half of all drug arrests in Washington;

WHEREAS possession of even a small amount of marijuana for personal use is a criminal charge requiring court appearances and carrying a mandatory minimum sentence of twenty-four hours in jail and a \$250 fine, plus court costs and attorneys' fees;

WHEREAS these short-term consequences disrupt lives and create financial hardship for many;

WHEREAS even a misdemeanor conviction for marijuana possession can result in long-term consequences like loss of employment, loss of housing, loss of federal financial aid for college, termination of child visitation rights, and deportation and exclusion of legal immigrants;

WHEREAS, although white Washingtonians use marijuana at slightly higher rates, people of color are more frequently arrested, charged, and convicted for marijuana possession, resulting in a disproportionate impact on the communities struggling most to achieve social and economic justice;

WHEREAS in Washington, an African American is three times as likely to be arrested, three times as likely to be charged, and three times as likely to be convicted for a marijuana offense as a white Washingtonian, despite the fact that whites use marijuana at slightly higher rates;

WHEREAS evidence-based prevention programs, community support for at-risk families, education, and healthcare are more cost-effective strategies for reducing the risk of substance abuse than incarcerating people for marijuana use and saddling them with criminal records;

WHEREAS Initiative Measure No. 502 will legalize, tax, and regulate the purchase and possession of small amounts of marijuana for adults aged 21 and over;

WHEREAS Initiative Measure No. 502 will authorize the Washington State Liquor Control Board to license private individuals to produce, refine, and sell marijuana in marijuana-only stores, and to adopt regulations addressing safety, security, sanitation, quality control, labeling, and advertising;

WHEREAS Initiative Measure No. 502 will generate an estimated \$215 million in new tax revenues each year, with roughly \$80 million going to the state general fund and local budgets, and \$135 million earmarked for substance abuse prevention, research and education, healthcare, and programs for at-risk youth;

WHEREAS Initiative Measure No. 502 will create a per se DUI threshold of 5 nanograms per milliliter of whole blood for the psychoactive marijuana component THC, and this per se limit will not apply to the non-psychoactive marijuana metabolite carboxy-THC that can appear in blood and urine tests for days or even weeks after last use; and

WHEREAS Initiative Measure No. 502 will not change Washington's medical marijuana law, but it will provide patients new protection from arrest for possessing marijuana and new access to licensed, regulated sources of quality-controlled and Washington-produced marijuana;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we (1) endorse Initiative Measure No. 502 to legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana for adults 21 and over, and (2) urge our members, and all Democrats in King County, to participate actively in the campaign to gather signatures for Initiative Measure No. 502.

Adopted Nov. 22, 2011 by King County Democratic Central Committee

Submitted by Lisa Mc Shane, lisa@newapproachwa.org, 206-633-2012;
Previously endorsed by the 11th, 30th, 36th, 39th and 43rd District Democrats,
and the Washington State Democratic Central Committee