

END NEW YORK'S MARIJUANA PROHIBITION

The City Bar, through the work of its Drugs & the Law Committee, **supports the creation of a system for the production, distribution and adult non-medical use of marijuana in New York State.** The Drugs & the Law Committee was formed in 1986 to research and analyze why the criminalization of drug use, manufacture, and distribution had neither solved nor ameliorated the problems associated with the manufacture, distribution, possession and use of drugs.

Marijuana prohibition is a costly and ineffective policy that has not succeeded in eliminating marijuana use. The failed policy has devastated families and communities, eroded respect for the law, and strained police-citizen relations.

Key provisions essential for inclusion in any comprehensive and effective marijuana regulation policy:

- **Provide for the expungement of marijuana convictions.** We are concerned about the civil rights impacts marijuana laws have had historically, as the enforcement of these laws have either intentionally or incidentally targeted black and Hispanic individuals. Expunging marijuana convictions will allow affected New Yorkers to have the opportunity to secure housing, employment, education and vocational training that would otherwise be unavailable by virtue of such convictions.
- **Reinvestment of tax revenue into research, education and those communities most impacted by prohibition.** The City Bar supports generally and consistently shifting funds away from enforcement to treatment and prevention, and we support building strong, healthy, and safe communities across New York State. Any feasible attempts to correct for improper impacts of the current policies must be considered as we design new ones. A portion of the tax revenue received by the State should be earmarked to bolster communities that have been harmed by historical policies; to shore up our state's public education system, which is a key to drug abuse prevention; and to provide treatment and drug education to youth in our state. In addition, operational funding and research funds should be dedicated to examining the impacts of the legal transition.
- **Create a market system that allows for fair access.** It is important that a marijuana regulatory scheme includes some prohibitions on vertical integration of the market and limits the number of licenses held by individuals in various categories. These types of limitations are designed to allow entry into the market of a variety of license holders, including small businesses, and to avoid undue domination by big players in the industry. The system should reverse, not exacerbate, inequities, and seek to ensure that individuals who have been charged with crimes in the past, especially marijuana possession and/or sales crimes, are not unfairly barred from potentially participating in the legal marijuana economy.

We urge the Governor and Legislature to adopt a system for the legalization and regulation of marijuana in New York



Learn more about the City Bar's marijuana-related work here: <http://bit.ly/2A2Ejbg>

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