



February 22, 2022

Dear Delegates,

I am writing regarding **SB 391(Oppose) Cannabis control; retail market introduced by Senator Adam P. Ebbin.**

I am concerned Virginia is going down a dangerous path, and we should instead learn from the negative impact this type of legislation has had on other states. As you can see in the below RMHIDTA Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado Impact Reports, the adverse consequences continue to grow in Colorado, especially the numerous reports of the legalized marijuana industry impacting the rates of impaired driving. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, marijuana use can cause lack of coordination and difficulty with thinking and problem solving, thus affecting safe driving. Having drivers on our roadways experiencing side effects of marijuana will pose a public safety risk to all citizens of the Commonwealth.

Since recreational marijuana was legalized in Colorado, traffic deaths involving drivers who tested positive for marijuana more than doubled from 55 in 2013 to 131 people killed in 2020. The percentage of all Colorado traffic deaths involving drivers who tested positive for marijuana increased from 11% in 2013 to 20% in 2020. Data pulled from British Columbia Trauma Centers also shows an increased prevalence of injured drivers admitted to trauma centers with a THC level greater than 0.

While commercialization of THC and marijuana in any form (Delta 8, 10, and other synthetics) is dangerous, efforts to mitigate the harm caused by “pot shops” and addiction-for-profit marketing to children is imperative. **SB 591 (Support) (Hanger) Cannabis; shape prohibitions** would place modest limits on access to these harmful substances and help prevent them from being consumed by our children.

Please strongly consider the following resources as you evaluate the issues surrounding commercialization.

RMHIDTA The Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado research reports

Volume 6 (Sept. 2019) https://www.rmhidta.org/files/ugd/abe036_d6b019e652244581b43a4fffa8214ce7.pdf
Volume 7 (Sept. 2020) https://www.rmhidta.org/files/ugd/abe036_a469b93a51e448e5a4cc295242b2bbc9.pdf
Volume 8 (Sept. 2021) https://www.rmhidta.org/files/ugd/4a67c3_b391ac360f974a8bbf868d2e3e25df3d.pdf

Cannabis Legalization and Detection of Tetrahydrocannabinol in Injured Drivers

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35020985/>

Trends in Cannabis Involvement and Risk of Alcohol Involvement in Motor Vehicle Crash Fatalities in the United States 2000-2018, <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2021.306466>

CDOT Survey Reveals New Insight on Marijuana and Driving

<https://www.codot.gov/news/2018/april/cdot-survey-reveals-new-insight-on-marijuana-and-driving>

Thank you for your careful consideration of this important decision.

Respectfully submitted,

Regina Whitsett, SAFE Executive Director