

Burgess Donna

From: Cliff Robinson
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2017 12:41 PM
To: JMR Exhibits
Subject: Written Testimony For Oregon Senate Bill 307

Madame Chairs and Members of the Committee,

For the record my name is Cliff Robinson. I am a retired professional basketball player, having played a large part of my career with the great Portland Trail Blazers organization. During my 18 years in the NBA, I utilized cannabis medically, preferring a natural plant over narcotic painkillers. I have experienced its medical benefits personally and have witnessed the plant improve the lives of many athletes. Today, I am dedicating my life to the fight to allow professional athletes the ability to use cannabis, a much safer medicine than the prescription narcotics pushed upon Americans today.

It is a shame that decades of cannabis prohibition has forced too many athletes, and Americans across all demographics, to use more addictive and harmful substances, such as Oxycontin, and even abuse alcohol. It is no secret that prohibition has disproportionately harmed communities of color and people battling poverty, regardless of their skin pigmentation.

Oregon is helping lead the way beyond prohibition and I sincerely thank your work helping craft vast improvements, especially reducing criminal penalties and allowing for the expungement of past marijuana offenses. However, one area where Oregon could improve is providing for safe, private places where adults may responsibly consume cannabis.

That brings me here to support SB 307 for two very important reasons.

First, people of color are still disproportionately arrested and cited for marijuana offenses in legal states. A study of Seattle police enforcement's arrest of public cannabis consumption has found that African Americans made up 36% of those arrested, while only comprising 8% of the city's population. Racial disparities also have remained in Colorado as African Americans make up just 4.2% of the state's population, but over 12% of the state's marijuana arrests. Studies have shown that marijuana is used at the same rate across all races, so these arrest statistics are very troubling.

Secondly, adults in Oregon should have the ability to utilize cannabis responsibly, but landlord-tenant agreements, particularly Section 8 housing, limits the ability of many Oregonians to use cannabis in the privacy of their own homes. Again, these rental restrictions disproportionately impact communities of color and Oregonians battling poverty, without the financial means to purchase their own home.

Low-income neighborhoods are likely to have more police patrols, leading to more marijuana charges for public smoking levied against people of color and those who can afford arrests and costly tickets the least. Senate Bill 307 is a sensible step forward to help avoid falling into the same pattern of African Americans disproportionately arrested and cited for marijuana, even in states that have legalized cannabis.

Thank you for your time and considering voting yes on Senate Bill 307.

Evidence:

1. "A preliminary analysis of Seattle police enforcement under new marijuana laws find that about 36 percent of those arrested for public pot use were African American, who are 8 percent of the city's population."

<http://www.bet.com/news/national/2014/07/25/african-americans-homeless-ticketed-most-for-pot-use-in-seattle.html>



African-Americans, Homeless Ticketed Most for Pot Use in ...

www.bet.com

A preliminary analysis of Seattle police enforcement under new marijuana laws find that about 36 percent of those arrested for public pot use were African American ...

2. "A first stab at understanding the statewide relationship between race and the criminal justice system shows black men and women in Colorado were arrested or issued citations at a disproportionate rate last year, and were more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to receive prison sentences."

<http://www.denverpost.com/2016/12/22/colorado-race-arrests-prison-report/>



Black men and women in Colorado are ... - The Denver Post

www.denverpost.com

A first stab at understanding the statewide relationship between race and the criminal justice system shows black men and women in Colorado were arrested or issued ...

3. "Police do patrol more in neighborhoods of color, and they also get more calls to respond in neighborhoods of color," Keith Humphreys, who studies drug policy at Stanford University.

<http://www.npr.org/2016/06/29/483954157/as-adults-legally-smoke-pot-in-colorado-more-minority-kids-arrested-for-it>



Legal Marijuana In Colorado Hasn't Stopped Racial ... - NPR

www.npr.org

Marijuana is legal in Colorado — as long as you're 21 or older. It's still illegal for kids to possess, so juveniles are coming to dominate the marijuana ...

4. "Marijuana use is roughly equal among Blacks and whites, yet Blacks are 3.73 times as likely to be arrested for marijuana possession."

<https://www.aclu.org/feature/war-marijuana-black-and-white?redirect=marijuana>

