



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**The Most Dangerous Thing about Marijuana in Wisconsin is that it is Illegal**

MADISON – Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison) released the following statement to announce the introduction of LRB-0154 to fully legalize marijuana in the state of Wisconsin:

“When I first ran for office, I would have never imagined myself introducing legislation to legalize marijuana. However, after listening to heart wrenching stories and experiences about the negative implications that the prohibition of marijuana has had on our state, I knew that pragmatic action was needed. Far too many lives and communities have been damaged by out of date and backwards cannabis policies, and we must take this important and necessary step towards rectifying these damages. The simple truth is, the most dangerous thing about marijuana in Wisconsin is that it is illegal.

The people of Wisconsin have said loud and clear that the prohibition of marijuana is not working– the results of the recent November election showed that through [referenda across the state](#) voters were in overwhelming support of legalization. Additionally, in a recent [Marquette Law School Poll](#), over 60% of Wisconsinites believe that all marijuana sales should be taxed and regulated like alcohol sales. With this momentous and growing support for full legalization, it is clear that the people are ready for truly pragmatic and common sense action. By legalizing recreational marijuana in Wisconsin we will open the door to [countless family-sustaining jobs](#), have the means to regulate and tax marijuana to provide [abundant economic stimulus for our state](#), and address the [massive and egregious racial disparities in marijuana-related arrest rates](#). Wisconsin must act now in order to provide real relief for our friends and neighbors.

I am proud and excited to reintroduce this legislation for the 4<sup>th</sup> session– LRB-0154 includes the following provisions, amongst others, that have been shaped from countless meetings, conversations, and partnerships with constituents and stakeholders (You can learn more about what’s new in the bill by visiting <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/48/sargent/marijuana-page/>):

- **Criminal Justice Reform:** Process of expungement & release for sitting “offenders” for low level non-violent offenses; decriminalization for other marijuana related offenses
- **Community Safety:** Required identification on licensed compassion centers; additional education and awareness components; prohibitions on open containers and usage of cannabis in motor vehicles
- **Labor Standards & Lifting Up Wisconsin Workers:** Merit based licensure system; labor peace agreements; labeling for Wisconsin grown and manufactured products; five-year moratorium on out of state industry
- **Protections for Gun Owners:** Ensuring expunged convictions and marijuana registries are not taken into consideration for gun purchases and ownership

This bill is not of my own individual doing, and does not cater to the opinions of legislators here inside of the Capitol building or any other special interests, but is truly an accumulation of the voices of the people of Wisconsin and works to represent and benefit all Wisconsinites. I will continue working tirelessly in my efforts, and I invite my colleagues across the aisle to join me in [legalizing opportunity](#) in our state.”

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*Melissa Sargent is a State Representative in the Wisconsin Assembly, representing the 48th Assembly District, which covers the east and north sides of the city of Madison and the village of Maple Bluff.*

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