



## Connecticut Adult-Use Cannabis Regulation Hearing: Logistics, Tips, and Talking Points

**What:** Judiciary Committee hearing on Governor’s Bill No. 16 — to legalize and regulate cannabis for adults 21 and older. The committee is chaired by Sen. Gary Winfield and Rep. Steve Stafstrom.

**Where:** Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, 06106, Room 2C (the room could change)

**When:** Monday, March 2, 10:00 a.m.

**How:** You can sign up to testify beginning at 9:00 a.m. in Room 2600 of the LOB. Testimony order is determined by lottery. Written testimony should be submitted to [judgetestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:judgetestimony@cga.ct.gov).

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### Tips

- Leave enough time to get through security and for parking if you are driving. (There is a lot next to the Legislative Office Building.)
- Be prepared: The hearings could each last several hours. If you get hungry or thirsty, there is a cafeteria on the first floor, along with coat racks.
- Dress professionally.
- Be polite and respectful to lawmakers, even if you disagree with them.
- The order for testifying will be determined by lottery.
- Witnesses are limited to three minutes, plus any questions from committee members.
- If you don’t know the answer to a question, that’s okay! You can note that another witness — such as an MPP staffer — should be able to respond to the question.

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### Governor’s Bill 16 — Short Summary

The governor’s bill to end cannabis prohibition would replace the unregulated illicit market with a taxed and regulated system with licensed cultivators, retailers, manufacturers, micro-businesses, and testing laboratories. It has a strong focus on public health, public safety, and social equity.

- Adults 21 or older could possess up to 1.5 ounces beginning July 1, 2020.
- Includes erasure of past marijuana possession convictions, reinvestment in communities decimated by the war on drugs, and fosters participation in the cannabis industry by individuals from impacted communities.
  - Requires priority or expedited licensing for equity applicants — individuals who lived five of the past 10 years in a disproportionately impacted census tract, who have a prior cannabis conviction, or whose parents do.
- The Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) will make recommendations to the legislature, including packaging and labeling rules, banning dangerous additives, prohibiting products designed to appeal to children, restricting advertising, requiring warnings about risks of

cannabis, and crafting rules to ensure the safety of vaporizers.

- Cannabis sales to retailers would be taxed at the following rates: \$1.25 per gram of dry flower, \$0.50 per gram of dry trim, and \$0.28 per gram of wet cannabis. There would also be a 3% gross receipts tax, payable to the locality, along with the standard 6.35% sales tax.
  - By January 1, 2023, the Department of Consumer Protection would make recommendations on whether to allow home cultivation for medical patients and adults' use, allow on-site consumption, and permit state-run retailers.
  - Regulators would be required to "maintain and prioritize access to" medical cannabis. Medical cannabis would not be taxed and medical registry fees would be eliminated.
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## Talking Points

We've provided some talking points below. However, it is advisable to avoid too much repetition. (Briefly making a few key points that other witnesses have made can be worthwhile, though.) If you know individuals whose lives were negatively impacted by cannabis prohibition, sharing those stories can also be quite powerful.

- Cannabis prohibition has been a disastrous failure. It has torn apart millions of lives with arrests and the collateral consequences of convictions, put cannabis consumers and workers in danger, and failed to stop cannabis use.
- The governor's bill presents a far more sensible approach to cannabis: reasonable regulation to protect public health and safety and a focus on repairing harms done by prohibition.
- While simple possession of marijuana is decriminalized, hundreds of Connecticut residents are still arrested every year because the cultivation and sale of marijuana remains illegal. Those who grow, trim, and sell marijuana illegally are at risk of armed robbery, violence, arrest, and exploitation. A legal, regulated market would create thousands of good jobs with legal protections.
- Regulation is only possible with legalization. Illicit cannabis is not tested, and it can be laced with other drugs or polluted by dangerous pesticides or contaminants. Legalization and regulation allows the state to control where, when, and to whom cannabis is sold.
- From most of Connecticut, one can drive 15-30 minutes to purchase cannabis from legal stores in Massachusetts. It's time for Connecticut lawmakers to acknowledge the reality and allow our state to stop sending the economic benefits over the state line.
- More than 60% of Connecticut voters support replacing marijuana prohibition with sensible regulation.
- Data compiled by the ACLU in 2010 showed that African Americans were more than three times as likely to be arrested as whites for cannabis possession in Connecticut, despite similar use rates. Those disparities continue in drug arrests post-decriminalization, along with issuance of infractions. While legalization does not cure racial disparities in policing, it dramatically decreases the number of fines issued and lives derailed, which disproportionately harm African Americans and Latinos.

**Thank you for raising your voice for humane cannabis policies!**