



## Connecticut Voter Guide 2020 — Senate

### Cannabis Voter Guide Connecticut State Senate November 3, 2020 General Election

See below for a voter guide outlining where each candidate for the Connecticut State Senate stands on legalizing and regulating cannabis for adults.

Candidates in **green** have indicated their support for legalization in response to our two-question candidate survey, in a public statement, by sponsoring or cosponsoring a legalization bill, or by voting to advance a legalization bill out of committee. Candidates in **red** expressed opposition to legalization, and candidates in **orange** are not known to have taken a public stance or replied that they are undecided.

If you don't know your state Senate district, you can look it up [here](#). After you fill in your town/city, street name, and street number, your legislators will display. Look for the district listed as "State Senate, District \_\_\_\_."

The Connecticut Coalition to Regulate Marijuana (of which MPP is a convening member) sent the following two survey questions to candidates for state Senate. The voter guide below is based on their responses, public statements, and incumbents' past votes. If a candidate in your district has not taken a public position, we strongly encourage you to ask them these questions yourself! We would be happy to update the voter guide with their answers (please email [DeVaughn Ward](mailto:DeVaughn.Ward@mpp.org) with any updates).

(1) Eleven states, including neighboring Massachusetts, have passed laws making cannabis possession legal for adults. Do you support making it legal for adults 21 and older to possess cannabis in Connecticut?

(2) Massachusetts, Maine, and eight other states have passed laws regulating and taxing the production and retail sale of cannabis for use by adults. A bill proposed by Gov. Lamont to allow the production, sale, regulation, and taxation of cannabis for adults stalled last year due to a COVID-related capitol closure. Do you support regulating and taxing cannabis for retail sale to adults 21 and older?

After you've looked up your Senate candidates, click here for our state House voter guide [here](#).

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#### **Senate District 1**

**Sen. John Fonfara (D)** — Sen. Fonfara responded to our questionnaire, saying he (1) Supports making it legal for adults 21 and older to possess cannabis in Connecticut and (2) Supports regulating and taxing cannabis for retail sale to adults 21 and older.

**Barbara Ruhe (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 2**

**Sen. Douglas McCrory (D)** — Sen. McCrory responded to our questionnaire, saying he (1) Supports making it legal for adults 21 and older to possess cannabis in Connecticut and (2) Supports regulating and taxing cannabis for retail sale to adults 21 and older.

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### **Senate District 3**

**Sen. Saud Anwar (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire, and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 4**

**Sen. Steve Cassano (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

**Matthew Corey (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

**Kelly Green (I)** — Ms. Green responded to our questionnaire, saying she (1) Supports making it legal for adults 21 and older to possess cannabis in Connecticut and (2) Supports regulating and taxing cannabis for retail sale to adults 21 and older.

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### **Senate District 5**

**Sen. Derek Slap (D)** — Sen. Slap responded to our questionnaire, saying he (1) Supports making it legal for adults 21 and older to possess cannabis in Connecticut and (2) Supports regulating and taxing cannabis for retail sale to adults 21 and older.

**Phillip Chabot (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization

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## **Senate District 6**

**Sen. Gennaro Bizzarro (R)** — In 2019, Sen. Bizzarro was quoted in the *New Britain Herald* saying he has trouble supporting adult-use marijuana because of concerns about the “gateway drug” theory. “I’ve got very grave concerns about that,” Bizzarro said. “I wouldn’t be able to commit to legalizing marijuana at this time for recreation use.”

**Rep. Rick Lopes (D)** — Rep. Lopes responded to our questionnaire, saying he (1) Supports making it legal for adults 21 and older to possess cannabis in Connecticut and (2) Supports regulating and taxing cannabis for retail sale to adults 21 and older.

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## **Senate District 7**

**Sen. John Kissel (R)** — In a 2019 *Hartford Courant* article, Sen. Kissel voiced opposition to legalization. “I don’t think this is the right direction for the state of Connecticut,” he said. “I think this sends a terrible message to young people.”

**Frederick Moffa (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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## **Senate District 8**

**Sen. Kevin Witkos (R)** — In 2018, Sen. Witkos voted to advance a legalization measure out of the General Law Committee, without indicating he would support the bill. In doing so, he was quoted in the *Hartford Courant* saying, “All this does is move it along into the next phase. Why shouldn’t we be debating it on the floor?”

**Melissa Osborn (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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## **Senate District 9**

**Sen. Matthew L. Lesser (D)** — Sen. Lesser responded to our questionnaire, saying he (1) Supports making it legal for adults 21 and older to possess cannabis in Connecticut and (2) Supports regulating and taxing cannabis for retail sale to adults 21 and older.

**Richie Ruglio (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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## **Senate District 10**

**Sen. Gary Winfield (D)** — Sen. Winfield was a proponent of Gov. Lamont’s 2020 legalization bill. His official website states, “Equity must be at the forefront of the conversation around the legalization of cannabis. Part of our job is to ensure that those who have been most impacted by the war on drugs are not left behind in this conversation, and instead are at the center of it. Measures like the expungement of criminal records for those with cannabis convictions are ways we can establish a policy that is equitable and just for all. Prioritizing equity applicants and sending a significant portion of the revenue raised from cannabis legalization back into the urban communities that bore the brunt of the unjust war on drugs are all important. In looking to do this we realize that from time to time unforeseen issues will arise after legalization. In order to ensure all perspectives are taken into account as we move forward, we have also included members with a background in civil rights and justice matters on the Cannabis Control Commission.”

**Carlos Alvarado (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 11**

**Sen. Martin Looney (D)** — Sen. Looney has sponsored adult-use cannabis legalization bills, and he testified in support of a 2019 legalization bill. In 2020, Sen. Looney was quoted in the *CT Post* saying, “I think its time has come. Our neighboring states are all doing it or all contemplating it.”

**Jameson White (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

**Alexander Taubes (D)** — Mr. Taubes responded to our questionnaire, saying he (1) Supports making it legal for adults 21 and older to possess cannabis in Connecticut and (2) Supports regulating and taxing cannabis for retail sale to adults 21 and older.

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### **Senate District 12**

**Sen. Christine Cohen (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

**Joseph LaPorta (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 13**

**Sen. Mary Daugherty Abrams (D)** — Sen. Abrams official website states, “I support the legalization of marijuana. When marijuana already has numerous approved medical uses, proper oversight, regulations and restrictions on its use would protect public safety while growing a new industrial opportunity. And far too many people have faced serious criminal punishment for simply possessing the drug, a nonviolent crime. We can put an end to that.”

**Len Suzio (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 14**

**Sen. James Maroney (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

**Mike Southworth (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 15**

**Sen. Joan Hartley (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire. In 2011, Sen. Hartley was one of four Democrats to vote against the decriminalization of small amounts of marijuana.

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### **Senate District 16**

**Sen. Robert C. Sampson (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire. A 2019 *Hartford Courant* article quotes Sen. Sampson saying it makes no sense to legalize marijuana and then spend money trying to address problems created by the drug.

**Jack Perry (D)** — Mr. Perry responded to our questionnaire, saying he (1) Supports making it legal for adults 21 and older to possess cannabis in Connecticut and (2) Supports regulating and taxing cannabis for retail sale to adults 21 and older.

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### **Senate District 17**

**Sen. George Logan (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire. In a 2018 *CT Post* article, Sen. Logan voiced opposition to legalizing and taxing cannabis, saying, “Legalization is way out of bounds. ...I’m not in favor.”

**Jorge Cabera (D)** — Cabrera has not responded to our candidate questionnaire. In a 2018 candidate forum, [he advocated](#) keeping an “open mind” on legalization and noted cannabis enforcement’s disproportionate effect on communities of color.

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### **Senate District 18**

**Sen. Heather Somers (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to

have taken a public stance on legalization.

**Robert Statchen (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 19**

**Sen. Catherine Osten (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

**Stever Weir (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 20**

**Sen. Paul Formica (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire. In a 2018 debate, Sen. Formica was cautious on the marijuana topic and said it needed more study, adding it was a “dangerous and slippery slope” to legalize marijuana strictly for revenue.

**Martha Marx (D)** — Ms. Marx responded to our questionnaire, saying she (1) Supports making it legal for adults 21 and older to possess cannabis in Connecticut and (2) Supports regulating and taxing cannabis for retail sale to adults 21 and older. In a 2018 debate, Ms. Marx was quoted by *The Day* as saying adult-use cannabis legalization will create jobs and revenue. “Let’s not be the last state to do it,” Marx said.

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### **Senate District 21**

**Sen. Kevin C. Kelly (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire. In a 2020 *Monroe Sun* article, Sen. Kelly expressed concerns about legalizing cannabis, saying “I have serious concerns about the public health and public safety impact of legalizing recreational cannabis.”

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### **Senate District 22**

**Sen. Marilyn Moore (D)** — Sen. Moore did not respond to our questionnaire. In 2019, she [said](#) of legalization, “I’m no longer a hard ‘yes.’ I’m a ‘maybe’ now.”

**Marcus Brown (I)** — Brown responded to our questionnaire, saying he (1) Supports making it legal for adults 21 and older to possess cannabis in Connecticut and (2) Supports regulating and taxing cannabis for retail sale to adults 21 and older. He also offered these comments: “Connecticut is behind the times. Far too many people, especially black and brown people, have gone to jail over possession of small amounts of marijuana. That makes no sense. We need to legalize marijuana,

expunge the records of those that have criminal records due to the possession of marijuana, and use the revenues generated from marijuana production and sales to reinvest in communities, particularly our cities, that have been most negatively impacted by the criminalization of marijuana possession."

Brown also added, "While states around us have made recreational marijuana legal and safe for consumption, our state is behind the times. Instead of Connecticut reaping the benefits of taxing the production and sale of marijuana, people are traveling to our neighboring states to make such purchases. That is a lost opportunity. I would support Governor Lamont's bill and believe it should be taken up by the legislature next session."

**Steven Choi (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 23**

**Sen. Dennis Bradley (D)** — In 2019, Sen. Bradley voted in support of SB1085 — An Act Authorizing and Legalizing the Retail Sale of Marijuana.

**Josiah Israel (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 24**

**Sen. Julie Kushner (D)** — Sen. Kushner stated on *Face the State* in 2019 that she is supportive of legalization.

**Susan Chapman (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 25**

**Sen. Bob Duff (D)** — In 2020, Sen. Duff was a cosponsor of Gov. Lamont's legalization bill.

**Ellie Kousidis (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 26**

**Sen. Will Haskell (D)** — In 2019, Sen. Haskell voted in support of SB1085 — An Act Authorizing and Legalizing the Retail Sale of Marijuana.

**William Duff (I)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

**Kim Healy (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 27**

**Sen. Carlo Leone (D)** — In 2018, Sen. Leone told the *Hartford Courant* that Connecticut should legalize cannabis since it will be available later in the year in neighboring Massachusetts. “If we don’t confront it here and now, we will be confronting it down the road,” he said.

**Eva Maldonado (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 28**

**Sen. Tony Hwang (R)** — In a 2018 interview with the *Hearst* editorial board, Sen. Hwang stated, “It is too simplistic to say yes or no, there are so many complexities.” He added, “We need to take pause and think about it long and hard.” He did say he supports the social justice aspects, such as expungement.

**Michelle McCabe (D)** — Ms. McCabe responded to our questionnaire, saying she (1) Supports making it legal for adults 21 and older to possess cannabis in Connecticut and (2) Supports regulating and taxing cannabis for retail sale to adults 21 and older.

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### **Senate District 29**

**Sen. Mae Flexer (D)** — In 2019, Sen. Flexer voted in support of SB1085 — An Act Authorizing and Legalizing the Retail Sale of Marijuana.

**Jessica Alba (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 30**

**Sen. Craig Miner (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

**David Gronbach (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.



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### **Senate District 31**

**Sen. Henri Martin (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

**Mary Fortier (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 32**

**Sen. Eric Berthel (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

**Jeff Desmarais (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 33**

**Sen. Norm Needleman (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

**Brendan Saunders (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 34**

**April Capone (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

**Paul Cicarella (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 35**

**Sen. Dan Champagne (R)** — In 2019, Sen. Champagne voted against advancing SB1085 — An Act Authorizing and Legalizing the Retail Sale of Marijuana and spoke against the bill saying, “Marijuana is not going to keep anybody safe.”

**Lisa Thomas (D)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have

taken a public stance on legalization.

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### **Senate District 36**

**Sen. Alexandra Kasser (D)** — In 2019, Sen. Kasser voted against advancing SB1085 — An Act Authorizing and Legalizing the Retail Sale of Marijuana. She also voiced opposition on her official website.

**Ryan Fazio (R)** — Has not responded to our candidate questionnaire and is not known to have taken a public stance on legalization.

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