



A Guide to In-District Lobbying for Marijuana Legalization

Presented by:



With:

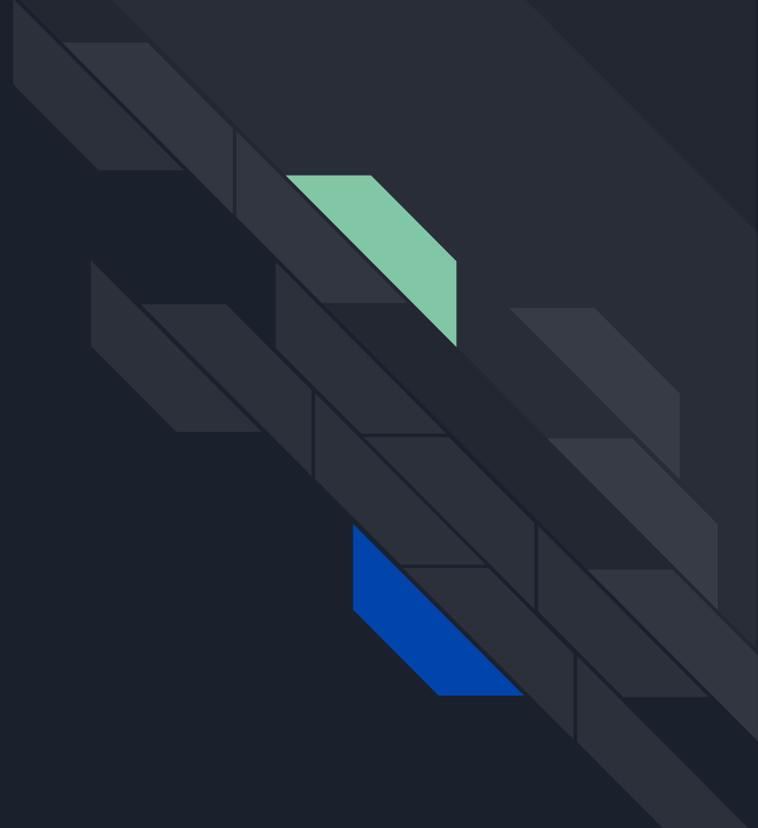




What We're Covering

- Legislative Update
- How to Lobby
- Why Tax and Regulate?
- Responding to Concerns
- Questions from the Audience
 - Submit questions on YouTube livestream, through Facebook or Twitter!

Legislative Update

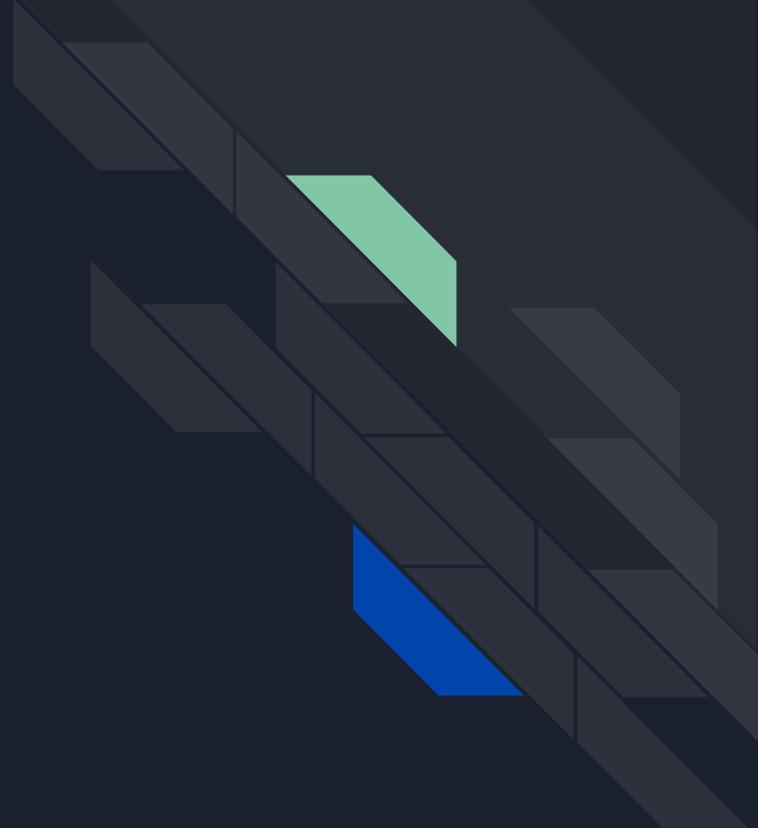




Legislative Update

- 2017 Regular Session of the General Assembly ended on June 7
 - Legislation to tax and regulate marijuana like alcohol did not pass, and neither did a state budget
 - Taxing and regulating marijuana like alcohol can still be passed as part of a state budget agreement
- It is unclear when the state budget agreement will be reached. Many proposals made; two included marijuana legalization
- The longer the state operates without a budget, the more pressure there will be on legislators to reach an agreement
- It is critical to reach out to your legislators to let them know why you believe it is important to include taxing and regulating marijuana like alcohol as part of the solution to the state's budget crisis

How to Lobby





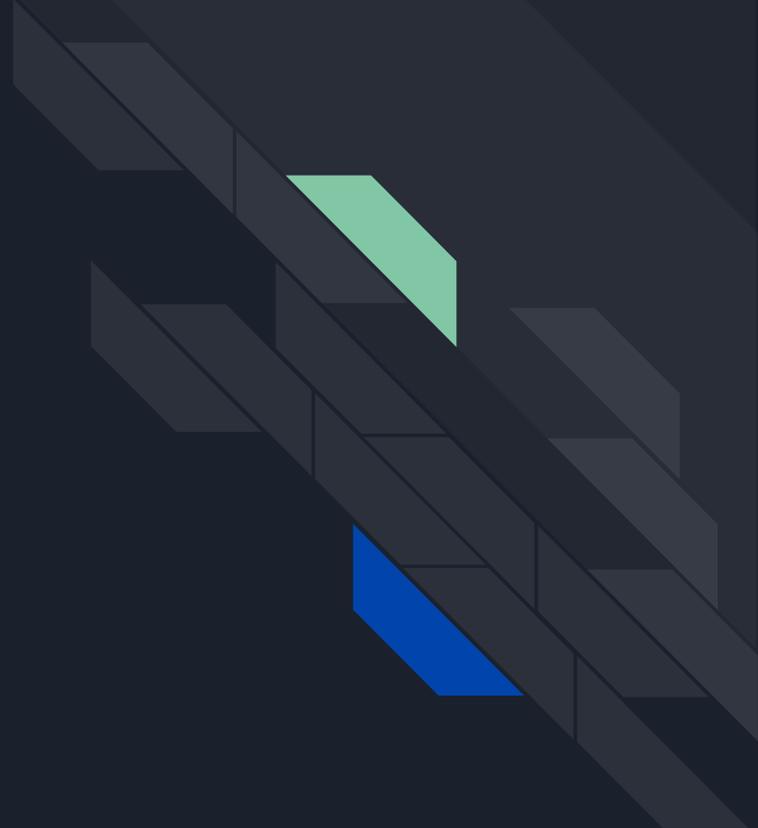
How to Lobby

Articulate and respectful advocacy by citizens can have a significant impact on legislators weighing their votes on issues.

Be professional:

1. Be prepared. Research your legislator; prepare your talking points; bring copies of key materials to leave behind, including your name, address and contact information.
2. Be considerate! Make an appointment, be on time, dress neatly in business attire.
3. Thank your legislator for his or her time at the beginning and end of your meeting.
4. Present and discuss your position, being respectful in your tone, delivery and of the time, even if you hear something with which you disagree
5. Ask your legislator two questions before leaving:
 - a. Will you support taxing and regulating marijuana like alcohol in CT; and
 - b. Would you support taxing and regulating marijuana like alcohol in CT as part of this year's budget solution?
6. Send a follow up email or note

Why Tax and Regulate?





Why Tax and Regulate?

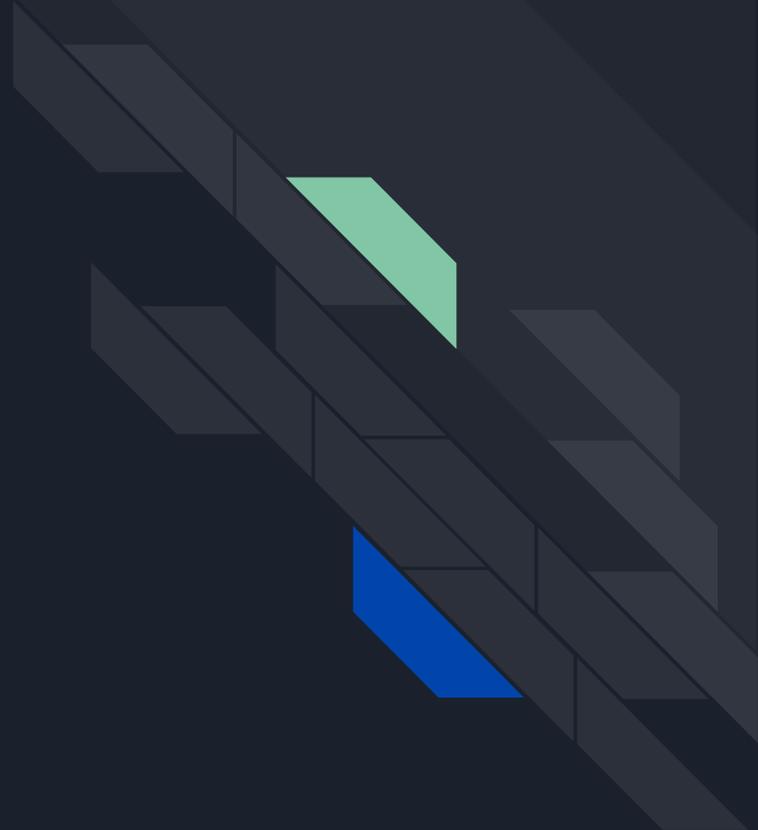
Marijuana prohibition has been just as ineffective, inefficient, and problematic as alcohol prohibition was in the 1920s and 30s. That's surely part of the reason why 63 percent of Connecticut voters have come to believe cannabis should be legal for adults.

Marijuana is far easier to get and more popular than when prohibition began.

Benefits of Legalization, including the following:

- Increasing freedom.
- Replacing the illicit market.
- Protecting youth.
- Promoting public health.
- Boosting the economy.
- Advancing social justice.
- Saving state resources.

Responding to Concerns





“Alcohol already does plenty of damage in Connecticut. Why should we legalize another drug?”

- Alcohol is a primary factor in countless deaths, while the CDC has not recorded marijuana as the primary factor in any deaths.
- Every objective study on marijuana has concluded that it is less harmful than alcohol to the consumer and to society.
- 1 in 7 CT residents already use marijuana each year, and regulations would help protect consumers.



“Marijuana is a gateway drug. Why would we want to legalize it during the opioid overdose crisis?”

- The “gateway drug” theory has been thoroughly debunked.
- The vast majority of people who have used marijuana never try any other drugs.
 - About half of Americans have tried marijuana, but less than 15% have ever tried cocaine, the second most popular illegal drug.
- States with legal marijuana have seen an average of 25% fewer opiate overdoses than states where marijuana is still illegal.
- Marijuana is a safer alternative for treating chronic pain — but CT doesn’t include pain in MMJ program.



“Wouldn’t legalizing marijuana increase use among youth?”

- A majority of Americans support making marijuana legal, and they care just as much about protecting young people as those who wish to keep marijuana illegal.
- Drug dealers don’t card. In a regulated market, businesses would be required to ask customers for proof of age, and they would face severe penalties for selling marijuana to minors.
- Research has shown that reforming marijuana laws does not increase teen marijuana use.
 - Rate of past-month use among Colorado high schoolers has actually decreased slightly
 - In Washington, there has also been a slight drop in youth stating that marijuana is “easy” to obtain



“Wouldn’t treating marijuana like alcohol make our roads less safe?”

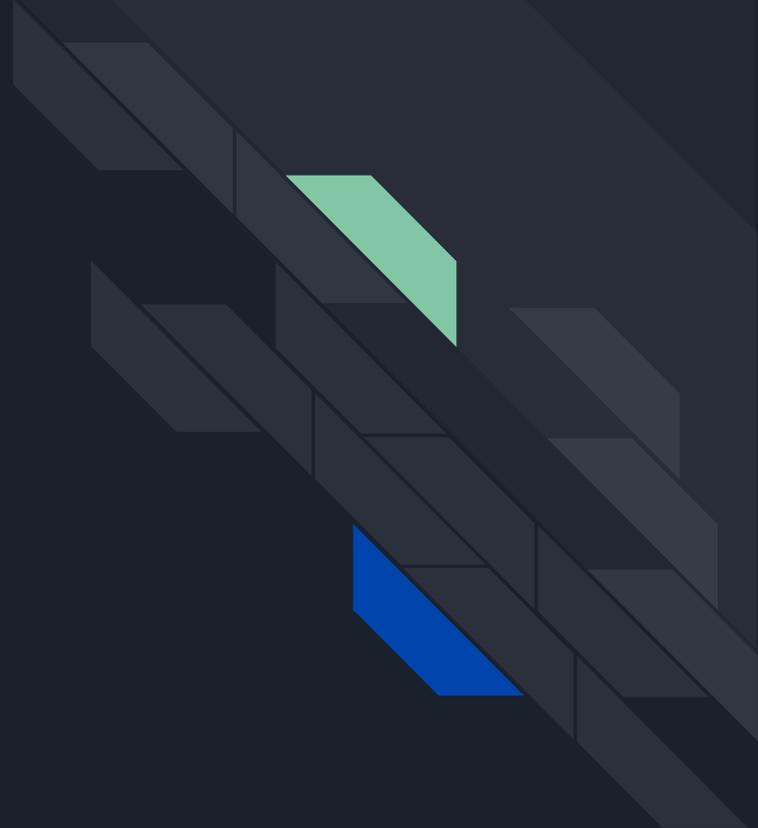
- It is currently illegal to drive while impaired by marijuana, and it will remain illegal after marijuana is regulated and legal for adults.
- There is no breathalyzer for marijuana, but there is also no breathalyzer for opiates, sleeping pills, or drowsiness. Field sobriety tests can be used to determine if a driver has a diminished capacity.
- Drunk driving is much more likely to result in an accident than marijuana consumption. A blood alcohol content of 0.08 increases crash risk 11x, while multiple studies have found that driving after using marijuana roughly doubles crash risk.



“We’ve already decriminalized marijuana, and it’s legal for medical use in Connecticut. Isn’t that enough?”

- Decriminalization was a good reform, but no adult should be punished for possessing marijuana for their own use — even if over half an ounce.
- Growing any number of plants is still a felony — even for registered medical marijuana patients.
- Americans for Safe Access, the nation’s leading medical marijuana advocacy group, gave Connecticut a “D” grade on patient access to medical marijuana. We can do better.
- The limited nature of Connecticut’s medical program has kept costs prohibitively high for patients, forcing many to turn back to the illicit market for their medication.
- Connecticut is one of only 3 out of 29 states that does not include a category for pain, leaving many patients without access.

Audience Questions



Thank you!

Presented by:



With:



This webinar, and other
resources, are available at:

www.RegulateCT.org