

**Resolution calling Upon the NYSDC to Support Marijuana Legalization
May 2018**

Whereas, marijuana is less harmful than alcohol and tobacco;

Whereas, existing marijuana laws have not had a significant impact on marijuana availability;

Whereas, legalizing marijuana is an important social justice issue;

Whereas, millions of peaceful Americans have been arrested, imprisoned, fined, or otherwise needlessly criminalized and stigmatized, potentially for life, because of their use of marijuana;

Whereas, over \$1 trillion have been spent nationally enforcing drug laws, including those pertaining to marijuana, since the War on Drugs was politically initiated by President Richard Nixon in the 1970s;

Whereas, because of drug laws, including marijuana laws, the United States has become a nation of mass incarceration – imprisoning 2 million American citizens which represents the highest imprisonment rate of any nation on Earth and 25% the world's prisoners;

Whereas, the enforcement of marijuana and other drugs laws has been racist and represents the new Jim Crow, disproportionately targeting and impacting people of color and minorities;

Whereas, in 2010, there were over 100,000 marijuana arrests in New York, 97% of which were for mere possession, and costing New York taxpayers \$670 million according to a study conducted by the American Civil Liberties Union;

Whereas, in 2010, in New York City alone there were 40,000 - 50,000 arrests for marijuana, 85% of which were arrests of Black or Latino persons, and following a change in policy beginning in 2014, as of 2017, there were still 16,925 arrests made and 21,024 summonses issued for marijuana in New York City, of which 86% of which were of and to Black and Latino persons;

Whereas, the majority of Americans and New Yorkers want marijuana legalized as demonstrated by the February 17, 2014, Quinnipiac Institute poll which found that 57% of all adult New Yorkers support the legalization of marijuana and 83% of those between 18 and 29 years old support legalization;

Whereas, eight states, Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon and Washington, and the District of Columbia, have voted to legalize marijuana and to regulate and tax it like alcohol, and more states are likely to follow and approximately 30 states, including New York, have enacted medical marijuana laws;

Whereas, conservative estimates are that legalization of marijuana at an excise tax rate of 13 percent in addition to existing state and local sales taxes, would result in at least \$500 million in revenues to New York State, and spur development of marijuana-based agri-business in rural areas of New York State.

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Now, therefore, be it resolved that the New York State Democratic Committee supports the legalization of marijuana which should be regulated and taxed in a manner similar to alcohol;

And, finally, be it resolved that the New York State Democratic Committee supports and endorses the “Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act,” NYS legislation sponsored by Buffalo Assembly Member Crystal Peoples-Stokes (A3506-B-2018) and Senator Elizabeth Kruger (S3040-B-2018) which, if enacted, would alleviate many of the problems described above for New Yorkers while raising hundreds of millions of dollars in sales tax revenues which could be used to support needed programs, close budget gaps, or finance tax cuts.