



Committee on Social Services

~MINUTES~

Tuesday, November 13, 2018

1:00 PM

Committee Chair: Kitley Covill

Committee Room, 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 10601

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CALL TO ORDER

Joint with Environment, Health & Energy

With a quorum present, Chair Kitley Covill called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Kitley Covill	Chair	Present	
Nancy Barr	D6 Legislator	Present	
MaryJane Shimsky	D12 Legislator (Majority Whip)	Present	
David J. Tubiolo	D14 Legislator	Present	
Alfreda Williams	D8 Legislator (Vice Chair)	Present	

MINUTES APPROVAL

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Discussion on the legalization and decriminalization of marijuana.

Invited Guest

Judy Mezey

Legislator Barr introduced Judy Mezey, from Student Assistance Services to speak about the effects of marijuana legalization. She stated that the effective amount of THC has increased over the years from 3% to 90% and that young people are using juuls to vape. She urged policymakers to consider further approaches to decriminalization instead of legalization. It appears that marijuana legalization correlates to negative impacts to public health and safety. Arrests for marijuana use and distribution have increase despite advocates saying it would have a positive impact on public safety. In Colorado, hospitalization rates have increased and due to the potency of marijuana there have been harsher reactions to marijuana which hasn't been seen before. Also, fatal traffic accidents have increased in the years following legalization of marijuana, however, Judy noted that data can be spun either way.

In terms of social justice reform in relation to Marijuana Legalization, the data out of Colorado has shown that Blacks and Hispanics youth are continuing to be arrested at higher rates 58% and 29% respectively while white youth arrests have gone down 8%. New marijuana shops seemed to be disproportionately targeting minority communities as well, this correlates with the number of alcohol and tobacco shops that also do business in these same communities.

According to the US Attorney for Colorado, marijuana tax revenue adds less than one percent to the tax coffers and is wiped out by regulatory, public health and safety cost of commercialization. For every dollar that alcohol brings in taxes there are seven dollars it cost society related to public health, the same with gambling and solving our education costs. Chair Covill asked for a clarification on the 7 to 1 cost on alcohol and Judy stated she would be able to get her that information.

Legislator Tubiolo stated that he read about all taxed money from marijuana went back into schools and was used to hire teachers and provide resources for them and it was helpful in accomplishing those goals. Judy stated she didn't have the information regarding those revenues but would follow up.

Marijuana legalization has shown increases usage and an increase in school suspensions, suicide victims testing positive for marijuana use increase. Judy presented a video of the Mayor of Denver speaking about rethinking voting for Marijuana Legalization in Denver.

Chair Covill wanted to explore how medication and the interaction that marijuana may have on children with ADHD and other issues. Judy noted that pediatricians have noted there is an adverse reaction to children who use certain medications while using marijuana and that they can have diminishing effects. Legislator Tubiolo noted the War on Drugs and how it was ineffective and said he wanted to look at social justice reform and how it impacted marijuana legalization. Judy noted that there was a decrease in marijuana use in the 90s which coincided with the increase of funding for prevention and treatment was available on demand so there are ways to address this without criminalizing. Legislator Maher asked about if these legalizations were done by referendum, Judy provided descriptions of different types of policies and was unsure about if all of them were done by referendum, but would provide Legislator Maher with the information. She also noted that in New Jersey there was an opt-out clause in the legislation and 36 municipalities in New Jersey have opted out, she was unsure if it was being proposed in New York state, but that it might not be.

Ms. Mezey noted that legalization and not decriminalization of these issues makes the problems worse and suggested that getting some of the profit motive out of the industry, setting up a fund similar to a tobacco fund which goes to prevention and more treatment would go a long way. Legislator Parker asked how many communities have learned about what SAS has done to raise awareness about marijuana. Judy noted that around 30 local coalitions and 25 of them have had the discussion on marijuana policy. Legislator Parker if SAS was working with any groups/organization focusing on an education campaign with elected officials. Ms. Mezey talked about the issue of flavoring in vape devices is enormous and should be included in a legislative packet alongside of opt-outs, and local control. Legislator Johnson asked if there are more adult focused work done on marijuana legalization. Chair Covill asked if there is a community that has decriminalized and not legalized, Ms. Mezey said she would get back with an answer for that. Ms. Mezey stressed that marketing of these flavored products is important.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

Unfinished Business and any other agenda items to come before the Committee.

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Legislator _____ seconded by Legislator _____ the Committee adjourned at 2:00 PM.