

Massachusetts Citizens' Initiative Review Pilot Project

Explanatory Note

This Citizens' Statement on Question 4 was written by an independent panel of 20 Massachusetts voters through the Massachusetts Citizens' Initiative Review Pilot Project. It includes information about Question 4 that the panel considered reliable and important for their fellow voters to know.

The Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR) system brings together a diverse group of voters to conduct an in-depth study of a ballot question and share their findings with their fellow voters. It originated in Oregon and has been used in that state's elections since 2011.

The CIR system is now being tested in Massachusetts to see if it will benefit voters in this state. The 2016 Massachusetts CIR Pilot Project is being carried out through a partnership between the office of State Representative Jonathan Hecht, Tufts University's Tisch College of Civic Life, and Healthy Democracy, the organization that pioneered CIR in Oregon.

The panel of 20 was formed from a pool of 10,000 randomly selected Massachusetts voters using a scientific method to ensure it is representative of the overall electorate (based on place of residence, party affiliation, age, gender, educational attainment, and race and ethnicity). Over four days in late August 2016, the panel heard from the campaigns supporting and opposing Question 4 and relevant policy experts, deliberated among themselves with the help of professional facilitators, and produced this Citizens' Statement.

The views expressed in the Citizens' Statement are solely those of the Massachusetts CIR panel. They are not the opinions or positions of Representative Hecht, Tisch College, Healthy Democracy, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or any government agency.

To learn more about the Massachusetts CIR Pilot Project, please go to: www.cirmass2016.org.

Citizens' Statement

Key Findings

The following findings are ranked in order of importance as determined by the citizen panel, from most to least important.

- Question 4 provides significant control to city and town authorities by allowing safeguards on the operations of marijuana establishments. It protects business and landlord rights and it prohibits marijuana consumption in public areas.
- Question 4's taxed and regulated system is modeled after the State's system for alcohol regulation. It replicates a system that is already working well in the State. The proposed system would be controlled, transparent and accountable.
- Question 4 allows people to grow a limited number of marijuana plants in his or her home under lock and key for personal use. Sale of homegrown marijuana is still illegal.
- Replacing the current marijuana policy in Massachusetts with a regulated and taxed system allows limited legal possession to persons 21 and over.
- Legalization would prohibit marketing and branding toward children, as with alcohol and tobacco.

Statement in Support of Question 4

The citizen panel considers these to be the strongest reasons for supporting Question 4:

- Legalized and regulated marijuana is safer than black market marijuana because the legalized product will be tested and clearly labeled according to state regulations.
- Question 4 will create a large number of regulatory, law enforcement, legal, and licensure jobs that are supported by taxes on the sale of marijuana.
- Question 4 would give patients and health providers ready access to marijuana without committing a crime. Legalization could help people avoid opiates, addiction and worse problems.

Question 4 legalizes recreational marijuana in the Commonwealth, creating new jobs and adding to the Massachusetts economy. This initiative includes measures for economic sustainability, regulatory responsibility and ensures access to safe products.

Safety, responsibility, justice, fairness and freedom are the basic values at stake in this matter.

Statement in Opposition to Question 4

The citizen panel considers these to be the strongest reasons for opposing Question 4:

- According to the executive director of marijuana policy for Denver, after legalization, the black market continues to thrive and change.
- Although in development, at this time there is no definitive method of testing for impaired drivers.
- There is conflicting evidence of an increase in teen use or motor vehicle accidents in states that have legalized recreational use.
- Question 4 will create a large number of regulatory, law enforcement, legal, and licensure jobs that are supported by taxes on the sale of marijuana.

This referendum proposes a questionable means of legalizing recreational marijuana. There is a lack of transparency as many regulatory policies and procedures will not be defined until after the passage of the referendum. The long-term effects of recreational marijuana use on society, not fully understood, present a threat to our communities and roadways. There is a lack of credible evidence regarding the financial stability and economic gains. The many unknowns in this referendum make it difficult to support Question 4 at this time.

Safety, responsibility, and public health and welfare are the core values at stake in this matter.