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ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

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Date: March 20, 2024

Re: Adult-Use Marijuana Legalization

Position: SUPPORT

To: The Pennsylvania House Health Subcommittee on Healthcare and House
Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Corrections

Distinguished Members of the Committees,

My name is Chad Bruckner and I am here to represent myself as a retired detective, having served 13 years with the Lansdale Police Department, and as a speaker for the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP). LEAP is a non-profit organization of police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience. Our mission is to make communities safer by focusing law enforcement resources on the greatest threats to public safety, working toward healing police-community relations, and addressing the root causes of crime.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of adult-use marijuana legalization, regulation, and control in Pennsylvania. As a retired detective, I believe marijuana legalization would reduce drug trade violence, rebuild police-community trust, free up police to focus on more serious crime, and regulate product quality and safety for responsible adult-use.

First, legalization would reduce drug trade violence. Spending four years in a patrol car, I saw plenty of bar fights and domestic abuse fueled by alcohol. I realized that one cause of violence in my community was marijuana prohibition – not marijuana use, but the fact that marijuana was illegal. Much like the prohibition of alcohol created Al Capone, I saw that the prohibition of marijuana creates violence. Significant profits reward anyone willing to win new turf by force. When police lock up one seller, anyone willing to fight can take over their customers and profits. Legalizing marijuana would reduce prohibition-related violence and restore law and order in our communities.

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Second, legalizing marijuana so we can regulate and control it for responsible adult-use would help promote police-community trust. As an undercover officer in the Street Crimes Unit and a coordinator for the Montgomery County Drug Task Force, I saw that in order to solve the most serious crimes, we needed people to talk to us. Across policing, the research underscores that having trust from the people we serve [directly impacts public safety](#) because when people don't trust police, they do not report crimes or cooperate with law enforcement. Given the threat of possible arrest, adults who use marijuana are less willing to speak to officers when we come knocking. When we arrest someone for drug use and possession, the community sees us [wasting taxpayer resources](#). Legalization would foster better cooperation of the whole community to protect public safety.

Third, legalizing marijuana would free up police time and resources to focus on more serious crime. In 2022, the FBI reported that police made [303,997 arrests](#) for marijuana possession offenses. Most people arrested for marijuana use and possession are not higher-level drug manufacturers and traffickers. Rather, many of these individuals have [little or no prior criminal history](#). We dedicate critical resources to arrest and jail people who do not pose a significant threat to public safety. If marijuana is legalized, our officers would no longer be burdened with policing marijuana use and possession and targeting communities for low-level offenses. Research shows that law enforcement would have more time to focus their attention on [investigating and apprehending perpetrators of violent crime like rape and murder](#).

Fourth, legalizing marijuana would promote public health and safety by guaranteeing state regulation of marijuana product quality and safety. When a drug is illegal, we have no control over it. Nobody needs a license to sell it, so drug dealers can sell it to young people. There is no regulation or responsibility for product quality or purity. When we move forward with legalization, marijuana products on the legal market will be produced by reputable companies and tested for toxins to ensure safe adult-use.

Marijuana legalization for adult-use has successfully been carried out throughout the country. In 2018, Michigan was the first midwestern state to legalize marijuana for responsible adult-use. Michigan legislators recognized the necessity of legalizing marijuana, to move it out of the illicit drug trade and off the streets into government regulated and licensed dispensaries. The sky has not fallen in Michigan since legalization. Ohio, Virginia, and 21 other states have legalized marijuana for adult-use as well.

Fifty years after President Nixon declared drugs to be public enemy number one, it is past time to correct the wrongs of marijuana prohibition. Marijuana legalization can reduce drug trade violence, rebuild police-community trust, free up police to focus on more serious crime, and regulate product quality and safety for responsible adult-use. Other states have shown that legalization is not a doomsday scenario; it is common sense and responsible legislation that time is showing to be successful.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience in support of adult-use marijuana legalization.

Respectfully,

Detective Chad Bruckner (Ret.)
Lansdale Police Department, PA
Speaker, Law Enforcement Action Partnership



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Detective Chad Bruckner (Ret.)
Lansdale Police Department, Pennsylvania
Breignsville, PA

Chad Bruckner began his career in the US Army in 1998. In his 8 years in the Army, he rose to the rank of staff sergeant in the Infantry branch and served overseas. He was designated the Battalion Non-commissioned Officer of the Year twice throughout his military career. In 2008, Bruckner joined the Lansdale Police Department in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

After four years as a patrol officer, Chad Bruckner was promoted to the rank of detective. In addition, Bruckner has served as a senior field training officer, a squad leader, an undercover officer, and a coordinator for the Montgomery County Drug Task Force. Detective Bruckner created an undercover Street Crimes Unit that investigated homicides, shootings, and drug delivery cases. In 2012-2015, the unit was responsible for a 40% reduction in crime and solved all shootings and robberies within the agency's jurisdiction. After 13 years in law enforcement, Detective Chad Bruckner retired in 2021. Since his certification in 2018, Bruckner instructs cadets on various topics at Montgomery County Municipal Police Academy in Pennsylvania. Bruckner owns and oversees a private investigation firm, Intercounty Investigations & Solutions, Inc.

Detective Bruckner received a MA in Digital Forensics from DeSales University. Chad Bruckner continues to serve his community as a part of the Montgomery County Crisis Intervention Stress Management team, and he is a certified Mental Health Peer Advocate.

The Law Enforcement Action Partnership is a nonprofit organization composed of police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals who use their expertise to advance drug policy and criminal justice solutions that improve public safety. With 200 speakers across the United States, LEAP representatives reach millions of Americans each year through educational programs and media interviews.

For event bookings, contact Speakers@LawEnforcementAction.org

For media, contact Media@LawEnforcementAction.org

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