

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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The Honorable Patricia D. Jehlen
Committee on Marijuana Policy
Rm. 424, State House
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Mark J. Cusack
Committee on Marijuana Policy
Rm. 544, State House
Boston, MA 02133

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Dear Chairwoman Jehlen and Chairman Cusack,

As a follow up to my oral testimony at the April 24th hearing, I am writing in strong support of two pieces of legislation I have filed to direct resources from recreational marijuana tax revenues and fees towards youth substance misuse prevention:

- H3167—An Act funding youth substance use prevention through a fee on licensed marijuana establishments**
 - Modeling casino gambling legislation allocation to compulsive gambling fund, the bill requires the collection of an annual combined fee of \$2,000,000 from licensed marijuana retail stores, manufacturers, and cultivators
 - Designates funding to Prevention & Wellness Trust Fund but could be designated to a substance addiction fund
- H3166: An Act dedicating one-percent of the recreational marijuana excise tax to youth substance use prevention**
 - Designates funding to Prevention & Wellness Trust Fund but could be designated to a substance addiction fund

Recognizing recreational marijuana use is associated with detrimental costs like harmful youth substance misuse, Colorado taxes the marijuana industry and invests a portion of those dollars to reduce the industry's burden. During FY2016-2017 Colorado invested at least \$15,000,000 from marijuana tax revenues in prevention, including surveys, education campaigns, and programming.¹ Decades of research and practice prove the enormous value prevention and programs can offer in reducing substance abuse issues and promoting youth social and emotional health.

Enclosed you will find a letter in support of investing marijuana taxes or licensing fees with sixty-six cosigners representing:

- statewide organizations, such as the MA Public Health Association, MA Organization for Addiction Recovery, hospitals, universities, addiction treatment centers, MA School Psychologists Association, Massachusetts Teacher's Association, and the Children's League;
- Over 30 grassroots community substance use prevention and public health coalitions representing every region of the state; and,

- Preeminent experts in public health, law, and addiction services.

Most of the citizen cosigners of this letter hold leadership and expert positions in our state. However, due to federal lobbying restrictions on grant recipients, some experts could not sign the letter with their official title and others had to refrain from cosigning. The voices of the public health community may be stifled by federal rules; but, as evidenced by the various cosigners to this letter, investing in substance misuse prevention enjoys wide support among public health leaders and the 351 communities they serve.

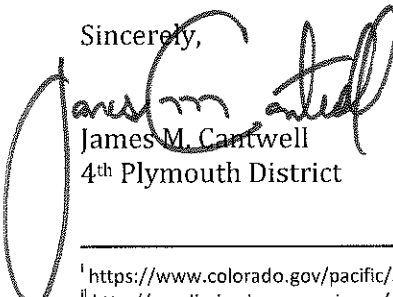
In March, Speaker DeLeo gave a visionary speech to the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce that expressed goals to promote children's "social and emotional development," to address behavioral issues before they reach a "critical point," and to minimize the marijuana industry's "negative consequences." Along with the Senate President's landmark Kids First Initiative, our legislative leaders are prioritizing the mission to promote children's development and health. Evidence-based substance misuse prevention programs can be critical to achieving that mission.

Registries, like the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration's National Registry of Evidence-Based Program and Practices, provide numerous concrete examples of the highly effective evidence-based prevention programs. Here are just three examples:

- ✓ **PAX Good Behavior Game (GBG)** is a team-based classroom strategy "designed for early grades, that teaches children self-regulation, reduces off-task and aggressive behaviors in the classroom", and achieves long term outcomes including reducing the risks of lifetime drug abuse (50% drop among males), lifetime alcohol abuse/dependence disorders (35% drop among males and females), and tobacco use (59% drop among males)ⁱⁱ
- ✓ **Life Skills Training** is a "school-based program that aims to prevent alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use and violence by targeting the major social and psychological factors that promote the initiation of substance use and other risky behaviors" and has been shown in multiple studies to reduce overall substance use, delay initiation of use, and decrease perceived prevalence of peer drug use (a risk factor for substance misuse)ⁱⁱⁱ
- ✓ **Communities that Care (CTC)** is a "community-level intervention that mobilizes stakeholders to collaborate on selecting and implementing evidence-based prevention programs designed to prevent youth problem behaviors, such as substance abuse and delinquency", and has been shown to reduce the initiation of substance use and the prevalence of substance abuse

Without significant investments in prevention, we will continue to lose ground in the fight against substance misuse and addiction. Allocating revenue from marijuana taxes and fees to prevention will appropriately charge an industry for the burdens it will create and firmly position our state at the forefront in fulfilling the national call to "unleash the power of prevention"^{iv}.

Sincerely,



James M. Cantwell
4th Plymouth District

ⁱ https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/16-04%20Distribution%20of%20Marijuana%20Tax%20Revenue%20Updated_2.pdf

ⁱⁱ http://goodbehaviorgame.air.org/evidence_base.html

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://legacy.nreppadmin.net/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=109>

^{iv} <https://nam.edu/perspectives-2015-unleashing-the-power-of-prevention/>