

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, ROOM 136, BOSTON 02133-1054

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June 27, 2017

The Honorable Patricia D. Jehlen
State House, Rm. 424
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable William N. Brownsberger
State House, Rm. 504
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Richard J. Ross
State House, Rm. 419
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Ronald Mariano
State House, Rm. 343
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Mark J. Cusack
State House, Rm. 544
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Hannah Kane
State House, Rm. 236
Boston, MA 02133

JOINT COMMITTEES:
VICE CHAIR, JUDICIARY
EDUCATION
HEALTH CARE FINANCING
TELECOMMUNICATIONS,
UTILITIES AND ENERGY

STATE LEGISLATIVE CO-CHAIR
COASTAL CAUCUS
PLYMOUTH COUNTY CAUCUS

Dear Senators and Representatives,

Thank you for your dedicated service to the Legislature and the Commonwealth as members of the recreational marijuana conference committee. I wish you all the greatest success in finalizing the legislation and completing the enormous task before you.

Enclosed please find a letter cosigned by 111 organizations, local and county leaders, addiction and substance use prevention experts, and citizens requesting your support for maintaining the \$50,000,000 for substance use prevention and treatment, as included in the House bill.

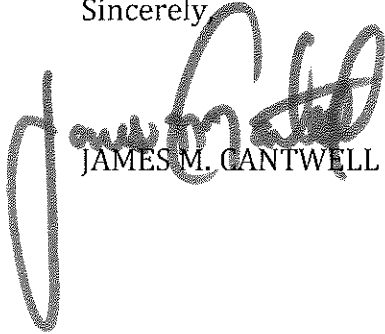
In only a few days of circulation, this letter was signed by:

- MA Public Health Association
- MA Organization for Addiction Recovery
- Children's Mental Health Campaign
- Children's League
- Boston Children's Hospital
- MA School Superintendents Association
- Massachusetts School Psychologists Association
- Recovery Homes Collaborative
- Association for Behavioral Healthcare
- Gosnold Innovation Center and High Point Treatment Center;
- Numerous prevention coalitions representing every region of the Commonwealth; and
- Many citizens, prevention experts, and treatment professionals

As I've learned from directing the Special Legislative Commission on Behavioral Health Promotion and Upstream Prevention, decades and decades of practice prove evidence-based prevention can prevent downstream consequences for our children and communities from the unsafe use of recreational marijuana and other substances. Unfortunately we spend less than 3% of all dollars for substance use on prevention.

This \$50,000,000 will firmly position the Commonwealth as a continued national leader in substance use prevention and treatment, reduce externalities from this new industry, and help correct historic under investments in prevention. Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely



JAMES M. CANTWELL

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Dear Conference Committee Members,

Thank you for your efforts to finalize the recreational marijuana law and to address various public health, economic, and regulatory concerns. We write to respectfully urge the Conference Committee to include language directing “not less than \$50,000,000” in tax revenues to substance use prevention and treatment and to include the specific allocation for school-based prevention programs.

In April, over 65 organizations and experts signed a letter to the Joint Committee on Marijuana Policy expressing strong support for investments in prevention given the significant concerns associated with youth marijuana use. We write to you today to reiterate that call for investment.

Decades of practice prove community-based prevention programs can prevent substance use while providing invaluable secondary benefits, like improved social-emotional health and academic achievement. Unfortunately, prevention is woefully underfunded in the Commonwealth. For example, as part of the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services’ \$125 million budget, only \$8 million is directed to prevention (a requirement of a federal block grant). Generally, less than 3% of dollars for substance use are spent on prevention, while dollars instead flow to costly downstream systems like acute treatment and criminal justice.

Recognizing the externalities from recreational marijuana and the power of prevention to reduce those externalities, Colorado invested over \$15,000,000 of FY16-17 marijuana tax revenues in prevention strategies, such as education campaigns and prevention programs. Our communities would benefit greatly from similar much-needed investments in evidence-based prevention and treatment.

Investing marijuana tax revenues in prevention and treatment will reduce the societal costs from the marijuana industry and intensify an evidence-based fight against substance use. Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

MA Public Health Association

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Director of Public Policy

MA Organization for Addiction Recovery

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Executive Director

Children's Mental Health Campaign

Courtney Chelo, Coalition Manager

Association for Behavioral Healthcare

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Thomas Scott Ed.D., Executive Director

Children's League of Massachusetts

Erin Bradley, Executive Director

Gosnold Innovation Center

Raymond V. Tamasi, President & Founder

Recovery Homes Collaborative of MA

Dr. Robert L. Monahan, President

MA School Psychologists Association

Kristine Camacho, President

Boston Children's Hospital

Sandra Fenwick, President / CEO

Social-Emotional Learning Alliance

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