

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to establish an
2 advisory committee to conduct an ongoing study on the
3 legalization or decriminalization of marijuana and to report
4 its findings and recommendations to the House of
5 Representatives.

6 WHEREAS, The use of marijuana for medicinal and recreational
7 purposes has been part of our society for many decades; and

8 WHEREAS, For many seriously ill patients, medical marijuana
9 has proven to be beneficial to relieve pain and suffering and
10 treat symptoms of their medical conditions; and

11 WHEREAS, Approximately half the states and Washington, DC,
12 have legalized marijuana for medical purposes; and

13 WHEREAS, In 2012, Colorado and Washington became the first
14 states to legally regulate marijuana; and

15 WHEREAS, As of 2017, Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, Washington and
16 and Washington, DC, have legalized marijuana, while 16 other
17 states have decriminalized marijuana to some degree; and

18 WHEREAS, In 2014, Colorado collected more than \$76 million in
19 marijuana taxes and fees, while Washington has been projected to

1 collect approximately \$190 million in that state's first four
2 years as a result of its legalization of marijuana; and

3 WHEREAS, According to a recent Gallup poll, approximately 58%
4 of Americans support the legalization of marijuana, while only
5 approximately 40% are in opposition; and

6 WHEREAS, The legalization or decriminalization of marijuana
7 may achieve certain societal benefits, such as:

8 (1) saving public expenditures involving the
9 investigation, prosecution and incarceration of individuals
10 who use, possess or sell marijuana and marijuana products;
11 and

12 (2) enabling law enforcement officials and the criminal
13 justice system to devote greater resources to more serious
14 criminal activities;

15 and

16 WHEREAS, The legalization or decriminalization of marijuana
17 does not necessarily increase substance abuse or dependency
18 rates and may in fact destigmatize an individual from seeking
19 treatment because the social and criminal consequences are less
20 of a concern; and

21 WHEREAS, More information and statistics are necessary for
22 the General Assembly and the Commonwealth to better evaluate the
23 impact of the legalization or decriminalization of marijuana on
24 the health and safety of residents, the economy, law enforcement
25 and the criminal justice system of this Commonwealth; therefore
26 be it

27 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint
28 State Government Commission to conduct an ongoing study on the
29 legalization or decriminalization of marijuana in this
30 Commonwealth and its effects on the health and safety of

1 residents, the economy, law enforcement and the criminal justice
2 system of this Commonwealth; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission
4 establish an advisory committee consisting of approximately 25
5 members from across this Commonwealth, including:

6 (1) representatives from:

7 (i) the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs;

8 (ii) the Department of Education;

9 (iii) the Department of Health;

10 (iv) the Department of Human Services;

11 (v) the Insurance Department;

12 (vi) the Pennsylvania State Police;

13 (vii) the Health Care Cost Containment Council;

14 (viii) the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing;

15 (ix) the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and
16 Delinquency; and

17 (x) the Office of Attorney General;

18 (2) law enforcement officials;

19 (3) drug and alcohol service providers;

20 (4) professionals from the criminal justice system,
21 including, but not limited to, prosecutors, defense attorneys
22 and judges;

23 (5) other individuals with knowledge and expertise in
24 matters involving the subject of this resolution; and

25 (6) representatives from other departments or agencies
26 of the Commonwealth or from other entities that the Joint
27 State Government Commission deems appropriate in conducting
28 the study under this resolution;

29 and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission form the

1 advisory committee within three months of the adoption of this
2 resolution; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission develop
4 reports in collaboration with the advisory committee, which, at
5 a minimum, include the following regarding the legalization or
6 decriminalization of marijuana:

7 (1) the effects of the health and safety of residents of
8 this Commonwealth, including patients with serious and
9 chronic medical conditions, children and families;

10 (2) the economic effects, including, but not limited to,
11 tax revenue generated, the costs associated with drug and
12 alcohol diagnosis and treatment and the changes in
13 expenditures associated with criminal investigations,
14 prosecutions and incarceration;

15 (3) the effects on drug and alcohol addiction rates;

16 (4) the effects on crime rates and incarceration rates;

17 (5) any changes in the relationship between law
18 enforcement officials and members of the community;

19 (6) the effects on law enforcement and criminal justice
20 procedures; and

21 (7) any other matters deemed appropriate by the Joint
22 State Government Commission;

23 and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the reports of the Joint State Government
25 Commission also contain:

26 (1) nationwide statistics regarding marijuana use and
27 the effects of the legalization or decriminalization of
28 marijuana;

29 (2) a summary of the laws from other jurisdictions
30 regarding the use of marijuana; and

1 (3) policy recommendations and proposed legislation
2 regarding the use of marijuana in this Commonwealth and
3 related issues;

4 and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission may, as
6 it deems necessary, hold informational meetings to receive
7 testimony from professionals or organizations with expertise in
8 the matters described in this resolution; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue an
10 initial report of its findings and recommendations to the House
11 of Representatives no later than one year after the adoption of
12 this resolution; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue
14 comprehensive reports of its findings and recommendations to the
15 House of Representatives at least every two years after the
16 issuance of the initial report.