



**Tompkins County Legislature**

Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building  
Ithaca, NY 14850

Meeting: 10/09/18 03:00 PM  
Department: Tompkins County Legislature  
Category: Public Health  
Functional Category: Public Safety

**SCHEDULED**

**RESOLUTION NO.      DOC ID: 8057**

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**Resolution in Support of Marijuana Legalization in New York State**

WHEREAS, over \$1 trillion has been spent nationally enforcing drug laws, including those pertaining to marijuana, since the drug war was initiated in the 1970's, and

WHEREAS, the existing drug laws have contributed significantly to the mass incarceration of 2 million American citizens which represents the highest imprisonment rate of any nation and 25% of the world's prisoners, and

WHEREAS, marijuana is the most widely used illicit substance and marijuana possession is the most commonly charged drug offense; accounting for over 600,000 Americans who are arrested, imprisoned, fined, or otherwise criminalized and stigmatized, potentially for life, because of their use of marijuana each year, and

WHEREAS, New York State has one of the worst racial disparities in arrests in the United States, with people of color being eight times more likely to be arrested for possession than white people, despite similar rates of use, and

WHEREAS, since 1996, there have been over 800,000 low-level marijuana possession arrests in New York, and

WHEREAS, in 2010 alone, New York State spent \$675 million enforcing marijuana prohibition, and

WHEREAS, existing marijuana laws have been ineffective at curbing use, improving public health outcomes, or increasing public safety, and

WHEREAS, the American public, at 93%, overwhelmingly supports legalizing medical marijuana and believe the drug should be legal for medical uses, and

WHEREAS, 30 states and the District of Columbia have broken from the federal government and allowed access to marijuana for medicinal purposes, and

WHEREAS, nine states: Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington, and the District of Columbia, have voted to legalize marijuana for adult use, and

WHEREAS, 63% of New Yorkers support the legalization of marijuana for adult use, and

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Health has concluded that the benefits of taxing and regulating marijuana far outweigh any potential negative consequences, and

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of New York has accepted that conclusion and endorsed marijuana legalization, and

WHEREAS, legalizing and taxing marijuana would generate significant revenue that could be used to fund public schools, libraries, early childhood education, re-entry services, adult education programs, research, public education programs, and community development projects, and

WHEREAS, legalizing marijuana would spur development of marijuana-based agri-business in rural areas of New York State, and

1  
2 WHEREAS, the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA) S. 3040 (Krueger) / A. 3506 (Peoples-  
3 Stokes) legalizes the production, distribution, and use of marijuana by removing the substance from classification as an  
4 illicit drug under New York’s Controlled Substances Act, and  
5

6 WHEREAS, the MRTA will create a responsible and well-regulated industry for adults over the age of 21 and  
7 work actively to limit youth access in ways that are unachievable under prohibition, and  
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9 WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Legislature understands the legalization of marijuana in the state of New  
10 York could have unintended negative consequences, and  
11

12 WHEREAS, the MRTA will address the failed policy of marijuana prohibition and work to undo some of its  
13 negative results, and  
14

15 WHEREAS, the MRTA will serve a greater public good than prohibition has by saving law enforcement  
16 resources and instead generating millions in tax revenue to be used to support efforts to end the opioid epidemic in  
17 New York State, to invest in New York’s public schools, support unintended consequences, and rebuild communities  
18 that have been most harmed by marijuana prohibition’s collateral consequences, and  
19

20 WHEREAS, the MRTA will end the disproportionate enforcement of marijuana prohibition in communities of  
21 color that has directly led to reduced access to advancement opportunities including the ability of an individual to get a  
22 loan, get a job, go to college, or have a place to live, and  
23

24 WHEREAS, racial justice, economic opportunity, and public health are priorities of the residents of Tompkins  
25 County, now therefore be it  
26

27 RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Health and Human Services Committee, That the Tompkins County  
28 Legislature:

- 29 1. Supports the bringing an end of marijuana prohibition;
- 30 2. Supports the creation of a diverse and inclusive marijuana industry;
- 31 3. Supports the reinvestment of revenue from taxed and regulated marijuana in communities that were  
32 impacted by the war on drugs; and
- 33 4. Supports the passage of the Marijuana Regulation legalization of marijuana and the Marijuana Regulation  
34 and Taxation Act,  
35

36 RESOLVED, further, That the Clerk of the Legislature send copies of this resolution to Assemblywoman  
37 Barbara Lifton and State Senators James L. Seward, Pamela Helming, and Thomas F. O’Mara and request their  
38 support for the passage of the legislation.

39 **SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20**