

Phenomenons in Politics – Tri-Partisan Support in RI? The Marijuana Regulation, Control and Taxation Act

Bill: H-7506 “Held For Further Study”



On May 16, a RI House Judiciary Committee recommended that the Marijuana Regulation, Control & Taxation Act (Bill: H-7506) be “held for further study” along with six other marijuana-related bills. What this means is that they will wait for those who proposed the bill to come back with more convincing research that would warrant an actual vote. What this really means is that the committee most likely will not vote on the bill during this session and it will be pushed aside, never to be spoken of again. Many people involved with the movement to end prohibition in our fine state consider this recommendation to be a defeat of the new bill. But this couldn’t be further from the truth.

There is tri-partisan support for H-7506, which is a phenomenon in itself, and this is the second year in a row that such legislation has been presented to the house. Over 53 percent of Rhode Islanders support legalization. Bob Plain, Editor/Publisher of *Rhode Island’s Future*, writes, “Legalizing marijuana could mean \$82 million in annual revenue for RI.” The statistics from Colorado and Washington have all been encouraging in matters concerning revenue, crime and adolescent use. The same can be said for those states with decriminalization and medical marijuana laws. What more convincing research could this committee need?

You have to ask what the true motivation behind such a decision could be. With any politician, it is essentially votes, is it not? Morals and values definitely play a huge part in any politically held position, but in order to get to that position — and stay there — you ultimately need to win the popularity contest. This means listening to the constituents in your district and representing their popular views. Therefore, one can assume that those who are opposed to legalization are being more vocal about their views in all of the right places.

To counteract this type of influence, be more vocal about your personal views and make them known, not only to your local politicians but to the people in your community. Those who oppose an end to prohibition are often just misinformed or influenced by the stigma associated with marijuana use. Present those who are unaware of the facts with sources and research that prove an end to prohibition

is a move toward progress. Become active in local politics, contribute to your community and present yourself in a responsible manner. Lead by example and others will follow, especially when the example is just.

Here are a few great resources for anyone interested in the legalization movement:

Contact Regulate RI and join the coalition to end prohibition in RI. regulateri.com

The Marijuana Policy Project (mpp.org) is an invaluable resource to the movement. They have a vast database of reports, studies, bills and other cannabis-related news and information.

The Drug Policy Alliance has an impressive blog, as well as a plethora of facts concerning individual rights, drug war statistics and more. drugpolicyalliance.org

Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP) is an organization that has front line experience in the war on drugs and seeks to stop it. leap.cc