



South Meriden Trinity UMC

South Meriden, Connecticut

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



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To the Honorable Connecticut State Senator Mary Abrams,
And to the Honorable Connecticut State Representative Hilda Santiago.

I attended today's public hearings at our State of Connecticut Legislative Office Building regarding possible legislation allowing the legalization of recreational marijuana sales in our state. Witnesses provided a powerful summary of the dangers to public health if our state adopts such legislation. There is compelling data from states already legalizing such sales that it is far from a "plus" for public health, a cost and a burden to law enforcement agents, and with negligible income benefits from sales and other taxes through such sales.

The main question I have for you is this: why would our state even consider the legalization of a substance whose use can lead to "Marijuana Addictive Disorders," as described in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM-V)? How does this provide public benefit to anyone - most especially vulnerable teenagers and young adults?

As you may know, I serve as the Pastor of a church that is in mission often on behalf of young adults in the city of Meriden. Not many of these young people in our city have a lot of chances to succeed as adults. Their opportunities to develop and maintain a productive life as adults is typically very limited. Many of these young people, affected by the challenges of their families of origin, already have limited skills to cope with the challenges of adult life.

For young people coming from more affluent communities, there might be "second chances" in life for a young person making a major mistake due to substance abuse. Our young adults in Meriden will have few, if any, such second chances. And when they lose their shot at a decent adult life, they will



turn to substance abuse, all too often, as a lifelong compensation for their failures, and be affected by others who have made similar choices.

One more legal and potent substance will not change that story for the City of Meriden, or any Connecticut city. It is gambling away the lives of our young people in our cities, for the sake of a few dollars of taxable income. The legalization of recreational marijuana is, in essence, a tax on cities least able to afford the loss of productive, taxpaying citizens.

Legalizing recreational marijuana sales will do nothing to improve the quality of the lives of our families, our neighborhoods, our downtown development efforts, our ability to attract better jobs, our ability to keep young people succeeding in school, and to help them to engage in constructive social activities. If you don't believe this, tell me how much you would welcome a store selling marijuana in your own neighborhood. If it's not good enough for your family and neighbors, why would it be fine for others?

With prayerful concern for the future of our city, and of all of our state's cities, I urge you to oppose the legalization of recreational marijuana sales at this time. Our state struggles already very mightily to make our cities a success. Let's not penalize them with even more burdens that will limit the future of our young citizens.

I will be glad to discuss this with you at a mutually convenient time, in person, or by phone.

Yours in faith,

John Blossom
Pastor
South Meriden Trinity United Methodist Church