

South Portland City Council
Position Paper of the City Manager

Subject:

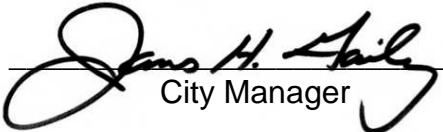
RESOLVE #24-13/14 – Opposing the legalization of recreational (non-medical) marijuana. Passage requires majority vote.

Position:

The City of South Portland is committed to the health and well being of all of its residents. Recently, a group announced a campaign to legalize the use of recreational marijuana in the City of South Portland. The City is proactively opposing the effort to legalize recreational (non-medical) marijuana through Resolve #24-13/14 and other initiatives.

Requested Action:

Council passage of RESOLVE #24-13/14.


City Manager



CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND

GERARD A. JALBERT
Mayor

JAMES H. GAILEY
City Manager

SUSAN M. MOONEY
City Clerk

SALLY J. DAGGETT
Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry

IN CITY COUNCIL

District One
MICHAEL R. POCK

RESOLVE # 24-13/14

District Two
PATRICIA A. SMITH

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTH PORTLAND CITY COUNCIL
OPPOSING THE LEGALIZATION OF RECREATIONAL
(NON-MEDICAL) MARIJUANA

District Three
MELISSA E. LINSKOTT

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of South Portland is committed to the health and welfare of the citizens of South Portland; and

District Four
LINDA C. COHEN

WHEREAS, the City Council strongly supports the success and positive future of the City's youth; and

District Five
GERARD A. JALBERT

WHEREAS, on January 21, 2014 it was announced that marijuana legalization advocates plan to launch an initiative to legalize marijuana in South Portland; and

At Large
MAXINE R. BEECHER

WHEREAS, the sale, distribution, and possession of marijuana remains illegal under State and federal law; and

At Large
THOMAS E. BLAKE

WHEREAS, studies from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Office of Applied Studies, establishes that marijuana, like cigarettes, is addictive; and

WHEREAS, recent analysis from the National Institute on Drug Abuse reveals the potency of marijuana has reached the highest level since scientific analysis of the drug began, with tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) [the principal psychoactive constituent of the cannabis plant] amounts rising from 4% in 1980s to 15% in 2012; and

WHEREAS, the higher potency of today's marijuana may be contributing to the substantial increase in the number of teenagers and adults in treatment for marijuana dependence; and

WHEREAS, marijuana is a gateway drug and according to the RAND Drug Policy Research Center, there is a high incidence of progression from the use of marijuana to the use of heroin and cocaine, with supporting studies indicating the younger an individual is when first using marijuana, the more they are likely to end up using cocaine and heroin; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine ranks 12th in the United States for monthly use of marijuana of youth between the ages of 12-17 according to data from SAMHSA for 2010-2011; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2013 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey of South Portland High School students, 27.5% of students reported using marijuana at least one time during a 30-day period of time in comparison to 21.6% for the rest of the State of Maine; and

WHEREAS, according to Maine Integrated Youth Health Surveys of South Portland High School students, when students were asked if they had used marijuana in the last 30 days, students' responses show a steady increase in the use of marijuana by students: 23.9% in 2009, 25.5% in 2011; and 27.5% in 2013; and

WHEREAS, research in *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences and Pharmacology, Biochemistry and Behavior* establishes that marijuana use is harmful to the adolescent brain, affecting the parts of the brain that influence pleasure, memory, thinking, concentration, learning, sensory and time perception, and coordinated movement; and

WHEREAS, marijuana substance abuse treatment admissions for youth between 15-19 is 56%, compared to 24% for alcohol according to SAMSHA 2007 National Treatment Episode Data Set; and

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association (AMA), the largest national physician organization in the country, pursuant to H-95.998 AMA Policy Statement on Cannabis, believes that (1) cannabis is a dangerous drug and as such is a public health concern; (2) sale of cannabis should not be legalized; (3) public health based strategies, rather than incarceration, should be utilized in the handling of individuals possessing cannabis for personal use; and (4) additional research should be encouraged; and

WHEREAS, research by J. Jacobus and S. Bava on the functional consequences of marijuana use by adolescents establishes that marijuana use reduces inhibitions and can lead to risky behaviors, distorted perception, impaired coordination, and can cause difficulty with thinking, problem solving and difficulty with learning and memory; and

WHEREAS, the dangers of illegal drugs, such as marijuana, and the threat to public safety caused by their use in terms of highway safety, criminal activity and domestic violence are well documented; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes the effort to legalize marijuana is contrary to the interests of the public health, safety and welfare of its citizens, and desires to preserve the rights of citizens to live and work in a community where drug abuse is not accepted and citizens are not subjected to the adverse effects of drug abuse;

NOW, THEREFORE, in Council, be it **RESOLVED**, that the City Council of the City of South Portland opposes legalizing the sale, distribution and possession of recreational (non-medical) marijuana in South Portland; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Manager is hereby directed to forward copies of this resolution to Governor Paul R. LePage, the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, the Commissioner of Education, the Joint Standing Committee on Education, the Maine Substance Abuse Services Commission, and the South Portland Legislative Delegation.

Dated at South Portland, Maine, this 2nd day of June, 2014.

