



April 24, 2023

Chair Marty, Vice Chair Frenz, Ranking Member Pratt, and Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SF 73, legislation to create an adult-use cannabis marketplace in Minnesota. Plift and each of its owners and employees support legalization. However, SF73 must do more to heal the damage caused by the war on drugs and include more diversity in the bill drafting process.

For far too long in this county, people of color, particularly black and brown men, have been targeted and victimized by the War on Drugs. Lies created by the War on Drugs, such as “marijuana makes black men paranoid and therefore a threat”, or “all black men who smell like marijuana are drug dealers with guns”, have been at the core of two of the most shocking murders and displays of racism in recent memory. Minnesota has been in the national spotlight around social equity and race relations in recent years, and I think we can all agree, getting this legislation right for the BIPOC community is a positive step towards repair.

As drafted, SF73 does not address the mental damage inflicted by the War on Drugs on communities of color.

As drafted, SF73 does nothing to prevent law enforcement from using the smell of marijuana to pull over a vehicle, search a vehicle, or justify murder.

As drafted, 62% of felony marijuana crimes are felonies if SF73 becomes law. **SF73 is Prohibition 2.0.**

Some advocates suggest the opportunity to create intergenerational wealth is more important **than taking the time to fix damaged families and communities.** To that we ask, creating intergenerational wealth for whom? As drafted, SF73 classifies the young black men who were arrested for selling dime bags and the man who called the police on those young men as social equity applicants, so long as they lived in the same neighborhood. In some cases, those young men **may not be allowed to participate in the cannabis industry because they were arrested for cannabis-related crimes.** Just because someone lived in an area that was disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs, doesn't mean *they* were disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs.

We've heard some proponents say, “We can't use race as a factor to issue licenses”, yet those same advocates float the disproportionate impact the War on Drugs had on black and brown men to advance this legislation, without a twinge of irony.



This shouldn't come as a surprise - 95% of the advocates are white, including both authors, MNisReady leadership, and the vast majority of MNisReady coalition members. MNisReady chose Ryan Winkler, a former politician who notably directed a racial slur toward a sitting supreme court justice, over a long-time medical marijuana advocate who has been personally affected by the war on drugs. For additional context, we're a Black founded business and approached MNisReady directly about helping them to correct some of these oversights and truly make a bill and marketplace that's more equitable. That outreach was shunned.

Black and brown voices have been consistently silenced or told that continued disobedience would jeopardize their chances of receiving a cannabis license. Is this the 1950s?

Please consider doing more to help the countless families who have been, and continue to be, impacted by the War on Drugs.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this very important matter. We look forward to working with you to further uplift and advance the quality of life for our communities within our great state of Minnesota.

Let's remember why we started this,

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