

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

I'm Jonah Lantto, and I'm the owner of The Good Talk Network in Minot, where I produce podcasts, talk shows, and other influential media. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

I'm here today to urge a do pass vote on HB 1420.

The results of prohibition are a failure. Our current position regarding marijuana is a detriment to North Dakota prosperity, opportunity, and gainful citizenship.

There is no evidence that prohibition has benefited the people of North Dakota. There is, however, plenty of evidence to show that prohibition has stood in the way of success for the citizens of our state.

Prohibition has created criminals out of otherwise good people.

I ask this chamber: would you call the cops on your kids or grandchildren if you discovered them with marijuana? I don't imagine you would; the idea is incredulous. Of course you wouldn't turn in someone you love because they use or possess marijuana—so why support the status quo against them or anyone else?

Ending prohibition in North Dakota would release a great burden on our judicial system while simultaneously preventing our citizens from being penalized for the use of a plant.

When we arrest our own people we unnecessarily complicate their lives, ruining their potential to obtain good jobs, loans, and make general advancement in their lives.

This isn't about being pro marijuana. This is about being anti-prohibition. This is about being pro-business. It's about being a pro-North Dakota citizen.

Additionally, the economic opportunities associated with regulating marijuana are vast.

All around us recreational cannabis is happening: Montana and South Dakota voters have approved it; Minnesota legislators are anticipated to pass legislation as well. If we don't act now, as an elected body of leadership, to enable our citizens,

our investors, our business leaders, to sensibly prosper from cannabis, then we risk losing those investments to our neighboring states.

We can create jobs in a developing industry full of opportunity and upward mobility. Right now, we're upset at the idea of lazy stoners, occupying basements, eating munchies, and not contributing to society, but that's not the reality of the cannabis industry. The fact is: massive revenue is generated by people who don't have criminal records for pot possession. While we may not raise the billions of dollars that states like Colorado do, at least we can keep what's ours. At least we can keep this money in our state, with our investors, small and large.

Right now, in the United States, there are more than 240,000 full time jobs in the marijuana industry. There's no reason we shouldn't be adding a few thousand more in North Dakota.

Prohibition is a roadblock to freedom and opportunity. Let's stand together against ruining people's lives and join forces in creating laws for the future prosperity of North Dakota and our citizens...that would really BE LEGENDARY.

Thank you, and I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have of me.