

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AFSCME Council 5 Supports Minnesota House Vote to Legalize, Tax, and Regulate Adult-Use Cannabis

SOUTH SAINT PAUL - This evening, [AFSCME Council 5 Executive Director Julie Bleyhl](#) released the following statement after the Minnesota House passed legislation to legalize, tax, and regulate adult-use cannabis in the State of Minnesota and end its prohibition:

AFSCME Council 5 applauds the Minnesota House's passage of HF 600, a bill that legalizes, taxes, and regulates the adult-use of cannabis in the State of Minnesota. It is long overdue to move cannabis use from the illicit and unregulated market into a system of robust state regulation, oversight, and taxation. This legislation is a critical step forward in our collective fight for racial and economic justice and freedom. Without modernized laws on cannabis use that are backed up by facts and science, the illicit market sales of cannabis will continue without regulation or regard for the health and safety of workers, veterans, and the elderly who may need cannabis to eat, sleep, assist with PTSD symptoms, depression, and so much more.

Our state has already experienced what legal cannabis would look like since our state legalized medical marijuana in 2014 with a built-in system of testing for impairment and other regulations. In the more than 7 years since, we have seen exponential growth in support for legalizing cannabis for adult-use whether for a specific medical purpose or not. Over 66% of Minnesotans support cannabis legalization, regulation and taxation.

Our membership took the position several years ago in support of the legalization, taxation, and regulation of adult-use cannabis for its positive racial and economic justice impacts and to invest in public services and the workers who deliver them, communities of color, and in all communities across our state.

We are grateful for the continued activism of our members and the incredible results we achieve when we fight for our shared values. No matter our race, religion, sexual orientation, zip code or political affiliation, union members want what is best for our communities and an equitable recovery from the pandemic and reform that leaves nobody behind and directly invests in workers. AFSCME Council 5 calls on the Minnesota Senate to swiftly pass this legislation to legalize, tax and regulate adult-use cannabis in the State of Minnesota.

AFSCME Council 5 is a union of more than 43,000 working Minnesotans from across the state. We advocate for excellence in services for the public, dignity in the workplace, and opportunity and prosperity for all workers.



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We thank the bill's Chief Author DFL House Majority Leader Ryan Winkler for our continued work together and listening to our members' stories and lived experiences. We also want to thank Speaker Melissa Hortman and all legislators who supported this legislation to build a better, stronger, and safer Minnesota.

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