

**Subcommittee on the Impacts of Legalizing Cannabis of the
House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice**

Minutes of Meeting
2021–2022 Interim
August 18, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Edward C. "Ted" James, II, chairman of the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice, called the meeting to order at 10:41 a.m. in Room 6, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Edward C. "Ted" James, II, chairman
Representative Marcus Anthony Bryant
Representative Bryan Fontenot
Representative Scott McKnight
Representative Richard James Nelson

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Katie LeLeux, attorney
Sadie Becnel, attorney
Catherine Zeringue, attorney
Zachary Gonzalez, attorney
Stephanie Weinman, committee administrative assistant
Megan Sanders, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Faye Talbot, sergeant at arms
Myrtis Jarrell, sergeant at arms

III. OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Edward C. "Ted" James, II, welcomed and introduced the committee members and also the non-members of the subcommittee, Representative Wright, Representative Bagley, and Representative C. Johnson.

Representative Bryant, Representative Bagley, Representative Johnson, and Representative Wright made introductory remarks.

IV. DISCUSSION

Sherie Thomas, Justice and Accountability Center of Louisiana, 6220 Florida Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70815, (225) 362-0433, requested that: (1) the pending and open cannabis cases be dismissed and the fines and fees of any closed cases be waived; (2) that expungement of any cannabis convictions be free of charge; and (3) individuals with only cannabis convictions not be restricted from any occupational licenses.

Kristy Miller, Drug Policy Board, Office of Drug Policy, Governor's Office, 900 N. 4th St., Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 235-3073, spoke about the two major functions of the office: (1) to oversee the Louisiana Substance Abuse Prevention Strategic Plan and (2) to manage the five boards and commissions that are drug control related. Representative James and Kristy Miller discussed the data and synthesized reports that the Office of Drug Policy could provide to the committee.

Chairman Edward C. "Ted" James, II, appointed Representative Bryant as the chairman of the subcommittee.

Chairman Edward C. "Ted" James, II, appointed Representative Nelson as the vice chairman of the subcommittee.

Representative Bryant in the chair.

Michael Ranatza, Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, 1175 Nicholson Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 343-8402, requested that the subcommittee study four areas: (1) overall crime, available resources in law enforcement, traffic safety, impaired driving, and fatalities; (2) the effect on mental health and the ability to deliver substance abuse services; (3) homelessness; and (4) unemployment.

Stephanie L. Willis, ACLU of Louisiana, 1340 Poydras St., New Orleans, LA 70112, shared her experience as a prosecutor and the disproportionate amount of cannabis related charges.

Randy Hayden, American Nonsmokers' Rights, 13144 Perkins Rd., Baton Rouge, LA 70810, (225) 937-2841, spoke about comprehensive nonsmoking laws that protect workers and the communities. Representative James and Randy Hayden discussed replicating the state's current tobacco laws as it relates to legalizing cannabis for recreational use.

Representative Bryant introduced Rebecca Nugent, Louisiana State Police Crime Lab, 376 E. Airport Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 925-4379.

Representative Bryant introduced Jeff Zettlemoyer, Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, 1175 Nicholson Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 385-3217.

Kurt Wall, Louisiana District Attorneys Association, 30200 Government Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70822, (225) 686-3070, spoke about public safety concerns and requested that the subcommittee address the obstacles that other states have faced when legalizing cannabis. Representative James and Kurt Wall discussed monitoring the legalization of cannabis in other states.

John Davis, president, Good Day Farm LA, 18350 Petroleum Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 938-3305, introduced himself to the committee.

Dr. Ashley Mullens, LSU AgCenter, 101 Efferson Hall, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, (225) 278-1980, introduced herself to the committee.

Jacob Irving, Southern University Ag, 18541 Bay Ridge Ct., Baton Rouge, LA 70817, (225) 485-5742, introduced himself to the committee.

Representative James and John Davis discussed whether the universities would be able to meet the demand if the state were to legalize cannabis for recreational use.

Representative C. Travis Johnson spoke about serving on the Medical Marijuana Commission.

Bruce Reilly, Voice of the Experienced, 4930 Washington Ave., New Orleans, LA 70125, (504) 758-9420, spoke about providing insight on the illegal market, convictions and expungement, and his experiences being convicted and incarcerated for cannabis possession.

Lauren Chauvin, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, 500 Main St., Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (337) 501-8620, spoke about worker's compensation issues and employer liability.

Peter Prevot, Louisiana Trade Association, 530 Spanish Town Rd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 571-7617, spoke about understanding the transition from medical marijuana use to recreational cannabis use, and the impact that would have on patients. Peter Prevot also spoke about the taxing structure and offered his expertise as a certified public accountant to the committee. Representative Bagley and Peter Prevot discussed studying the impacts that recreational use cannabis may have on patients that are prescribed medical marijuana.

Representative Bryant and Peter Prevot discussed whether any other states have the same laws concerning legalized cannabis for recreational use.

Representative James and Peter Prevot discussed reasons why the state of Washington eliminated its medical marijuana program after legalizing recreational use cannabis.

Lisa Freeman, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, 7919 Independence Blvd., Ste. 2100, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 925-6991, spoke about the commission's research on impaired driving.

Representative Bryant and Lisa Freeman discussed how the members of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission are elected.

Representative James and Lisa Freeman discussed the impact that legalizing cannabis would have on highway safety.

Representative Fontenot and Lisa Freeman discussed whether any states have a legal limit for cannabis consumption.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 5 for information only.

V. CLOSING REMARKS

Representative Bryant made closing remarks and discussed scheduling another meeting of the subcommittee.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Marcus Bryant
Subcommittee on the Impacts of Legalizing Cannabis