**Harmon-Senate Hearing to Legalize Recreational Marijuana**

Colorado was one of the first states to legalize recreational marijuana. While 7 additional states and D.C have legalized recreational pot, it is important to remember that recreational marijuana remains illegal under the federal *Controlled Substance Act*. Federal law enforcement agencies have left policing marijuana within the state of Colorado to authorities, but it still enforces restrictions on cases of interstate pot possession, manufacturing, cultivation, and distribution. Federal law supersedes state law so **you are meeting as a committee, today, to discuss changing federal law.**

Senators cannot be experts on every issue so they conduct committee hearings to obtain information necessary to make informed decision about policy. They elicit testimony from people who can provide insight into a policy topic i.e. experts, concerned citizens, bureaucrats.

Each of you will be assigned a role. Your task is to research the role, prepare data/questions/facts to articulate your viewpoint, on the issue, and prepare to argue your position during the committee hearing.

**You will turn in 1-page FINAL DRAFT paper that includes the following:**

1. A statement describing the position you will be taking on this piece of legislation
2. 3 reasons why you are taking such a position. Utilize data, statistics, and/or additional facts to support your arguments
3. 2 opposing arguments that might be made against your position
4. If you are not a senator, include two questions you would ask by the senators
5. Senators- you have additional instructions listed with the role descriptions.

**Senate Committee Roles**

Dispensary owner #1 Dispensary Owner #2 Environmentalist #1

Environmentalist #2 Environmentalist #3 Law enforcement #1

Law enforcement #2 Law enforcement #3 Law enforcement #4

Prison reform activist Pot smoker #1 Pot smoker #2

Pot smoker #3 Cannabis grower #1 Cannabis grower #2

Anti-Non-smoker #1 Anti-Non-smoker #2 Pro-Non-smoker #3

Medical professionals #1 Medical Professional #2 Medical Professional #3

Medical professional #4 Drug counselor #1 Drug counselor #2

Pro-Governor #1 Anti-Governor #2 Pro-legalization organization rep

Anti-legalization organization rep Senator #1 Pro-legislation Senator #2 Anti-legislation

Senator #3 Neutral Senator #4 Pro-legislation

**Senate Hearing Roles Description**

**Dispensary Owner #1**

You want to open a business that sells marijuana. Not only will such a law make you money and bring in tax revenue for each state, a federal law would allow any profits to be deposited in banks instead of requiring an all cash business.

**Dispensary Owner #2**

You want to open a business that sells marijuana. Not only will such a law make you money and bring in tax revenue for each state, a federal law would allow any profits to be deposited in banks instead of requiring an all cash business.

**Environmentalist #1**

You are pro-legalization. You believe marijuana will have a positive impact on the environment.

**Environmentalist #2**

You are anti-legalization. You are concerned about the negative impact marijuana farming has on the environment.

**Environmentalist #3**

You work in water conservation and are concerned about water usage in marijuana farming.

**Law enforcement #1**

You are a member of law enforcement at the STATE level. You have to enforce state laws legalizing marijuana but juggle the federal Controlled Substance Act that makes marijuana illegal. In addition, you have a responsibility to serve and protect all community members.

**Law enforcement #2**

You are a member of law enforcement at the STATE level. You have to enforce state laws legalizing marijuana but juggle the federal Controlled Substance Act that makes marijuana illegal. In addition, you have a responsibility to serve and protect all community members.

**Law enforcement #3**

You are a member of law enforcement at the FEDERAL level. You are responsible for keeping drugs out of the country and enforcing current drug laws.

**Law enforcement #4**

You are a member of law enforcement at the FEDERAL level. You are responsible for keeping drugs out of the country and enforcing current drug laws.

**Prison reform activist**

You are a member of an activist group that believes reforming drug laws and making marijuana legal will help to decrease the amount of people incarcerated for non-violent crimes.

**Pot smoker #1**

You are a consumer of marijuana. You live in a state that has legalized marijuana.

**Pot smoker #2**

You are a consumer of marijuana. You live in a state that has not legalized marijuana.

**Pot smoker #3**

You are a consumer of marijuana. You have been smoking marijuana since you were a teenager and feel you have suffered negative effects of long-term smoking.

**Cannabis grower #1**

You are interested in growing and selling marijuana and additional products such as hemp. Discuss the environmental impact of cannabis cultivation and describe beneficial uses.

**Cannabis grower #2**

You currently grow and sell marijuana and additional products such as hemp in a state where marijuana is legal.

**Non-smoker #1**

You live in a state that has legalized marijuana. You are opposed to state and federal laws legalizing recreational marijuana. You are concerned about the dangers of driving under the influence, and concerned for the message it is sending in the community where you live.

**Non-smoker #2**

You live in a state that has not legalized marijuana. You are opposed to state and federal laws legalizing recreational marijuana. You are concerned about legalizing any illicit drugs, dangers of driving under the influence, and concerned for the message it will send in the community where you live.

**Non-smoker #3**

You live in a state that has not legalized marijuana. A family member of yours was diagnosed with an illness and marijuana has proven to help with the symptoms.

**Medical professional #1**

As a doctor, you are concerned about the long-term negative effects of marijuana on your patients.

**Medical professional #2**

As a doctor, you have seen both positive and negative effects of marijuana usage on your patients.

**Medical professional #3**

You are the head of the Public Health Department. It is your job to promote the health of the people living in your area.

**Medical professional #4**

You work for the National Institution of Drug Abuse. You have conducted research on the health effects of marijuana usage.

**Drug counselor #1**

You work in a rehab clinic and help drug users in treatment.

**Drug counselor #2**

You work in a rehab clinic and help drug users in treatment

**Pro-Governor #1**

You are the Governor of a state that has legalized recreational marijuana. You support this federal legislation.

**Anti-Governor #2**

You are the Governor of a state that has not legalized recreational marijuana. You are against legalization at the state or federal level.

**Pro-legalization organization rep**

You are the leader of an organization that is working to legalize recreational marijuana. Describe your organization and explain why your group is lobbying so hard for legalization.

**Anti-legalization organization rep**

You are the leader of an organization that is working to STOP the legalization of recreational marijuana. Describe your organization and explain why your group is lobbying so hard against legalization.

**Senator #1 Pro-legislation**

You are a senator from a state that has legalized marijuana. Describe your state. Prepare to help facilitate the committee hearing.

You need to ask 3 positive questions to pro legislation people

You need to ask 2 negative questions to anti-legislation people

**Senator #2 Anti-legislation**

You are a senator from a state that is against legalizing marijuana. Describe your state. Prepare to help facilitate the committee hearing.

You need to ask 3 positive questions to anti-legislation people.

You need to ask 2 negative questions to pro-legislation people.

**Senator #3 Neutral**

You are the chairperson of the subcommittee. You are relatively neutral on the marijuana issue. You see both the positive and negative benefits of the ban.

**First,** briefly describe the purpose of the committee hearing.

**Second,** introduce each participant and allow them to introduce themselves and briefly describe their position on this issue.

As the chairperson, you begin the question/answer session.

1. Ask a positive question to Law enforcement #1 & #2
2. Ask a positive question to Medical professional #1
3. Ask a negative question to Pro-Governor #1

**Senator #4 Pro-legislation**

You are a senator from a state that has not legalized marijuana yet. Describe your state. Prepare to help facilitate the committee hearing.

You need to ask 3 positive questions to 3 separate pro legislation people

You need to ask 2 negative questions to anti-legislation people

**Senator #5 Anti-Legislation**

You are a senator from a state that has already voted no on legalizing marijuana. Describe your state. Prepare to help facilitate the committee hearing.

You need to ask 3 positive questions to anti-legislation people.

You need to ask 2 negative questions to pro-legislation people.