

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 8, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

Leader Schumer, Chair Wyden, and Senator Booker invite you to cosponsor the Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act (CAOA), a comprehensive bill to decriminalize, regulate, and tax cannabis.

A growing number of Americans have made it clear, at ballot boxes, through their legislatures, and with their dollars: the War on Drugs has failed, and the federal government must respect the decision of states that have chosen to legalize cannabis. Nearly all Americans live in a state with some form of legal cannabis. Ninety percent of American adults believe that cannabis should be legal for either adult or medical use – including more than 50 percent of self-identified conservatives. Twenty-four states have legalized adult-use cannabis, reaching more than half of Americans. 38 states have legalized medical cannabis programs. The cannabis industry presents a significant opportunity for entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. In 2023, the industry generated over \$33.5 billion in sales and employed nearly 417,000 Americans. By 2028, it is estimated that the United States' cannabis industry could exceed \$75 billion in annual sales.

The question today is not whether cannabis should be legal—many states have already moved ahead. The question now is whether cannabis should be subject to the same high regulatory standards, based on preserving public health and safety, that apply to alcohol and tobacco. Federal regulation is long overdue to ensure that cannabis products are as safe as possible, to prevent access by children and adults younger than 21, and to ensure that state and local jurisdictions have the resources they need to combat impaired driving.

Federal legislation is needed to ensure that the tens of thousands of people harmed by the failed War on Drugs, predominantly from communities of color, receive the justice they deserve after decades of over-criminalization. And the federal government must catch up with the states and recognize that the prohibition of cannabis has stymied research into the effects of cannabis, made it easier for the illicit market to thrive, and ensnared thousands of people arrested for simple cannabis possession in the criminal justice system.

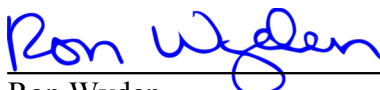
Last Congress, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden, and Senator Cory Booker, along with then-Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Chair Patty Murray and Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chair Gary Peters, introduced the Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act (CAOA): the first comprehensive bill to decriminalize, regulate, and tax cannabis. In 2021, the bill sponsors released a discussion draft with a request for comments from stakeholders. After receiving more than 1,800 comments and working with Senate committees of jurisdiction to refine the bill, the senators introduced the final version in July 2022.

The CAO A is now set to be reintroduced in the 118th Congress by the end of April 2024. We invite you to join us in cosponsoring this historic legislation and ask that you contact our offices by Friday, April 19th to be included as an original cosponsor.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator