



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

Legislation Text

File #: 24-1068, Version: 1

Agenda Summary

In support of social cannabis consumption.

Official Text

WHEREAS: Massachusetts voters passed a referendum to legalize cannabis as well as to create the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) to draft regulations and issue licenses for “marijuana establishments” in 2016; and

WHEREAS: The statewide referendum as well as subsequent state laws authorized the creation of social consumption establishments, in which customers would be allowed to consumer cannabis on-site; and

WHEREAS: The CCC proposed allowing 12 municipalities to take part in a social consumption pilot program in 2019, including Somerville, before scrapping the plan in 2023; and

WHEREAS: The Cannabis Control Commission has created several stringent regulations for social consumption establishments, including prohibiting indoor smoking, prohibiting the sale or consumption of alcohol and tobacco on-site a prohibition on-site cannabis infusions, the separation of consumption space from the point of sale for security or health reasons, the need to monitor customers to ensure they do not operate a vehicle while impaired, and a limit of no more than 20 mg of THC a day per customer; and

WHEREAS: The CCC has failed to provide a pathway for an events license that makes it possible for marijuana establishments to collaborate with other businesses or at events while offering their primary product, thereby further weakening their ability to do outreach on behalf of the business; and

WHEREAS: These stringent regulations make a potential social consumption space unprofitable for entrepreneurs in this space; and

WHEREAS: Despite years of deliberation and highly stringent regulations, the Cannabis Control Commission has failed to issue a single social consumption license; and

WHEREAS: The inaction of the CCC has created legal precarity for business owners seeking to provide a social consumption service, forcing them to operate either in private residences, in social clubs that are comparatively unprofitable, or in the shadow of the law; and

WHEREAS: 12 states and the District of Columbia currently allow social consumptions establishments, as well as several global cities such as Amsterdam, Toronto, and Barcelona; and

WHEREAS: The inaction of the CCC has harmed local municipalities, including Somerville, that wish to work with entrepreneurs in the social consumption space through the deprivation of commercial taxes and tourism that would be gained by hosting these innovative businesses;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED: That the Somerville City Council calls on the Cannabis Control Commission to work with the City of Somerville and its Licensing Commission to issue social consumption licenses to establishments that can meet all reasonable standards and regulations related to social consumption; **AND BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That a copy of this resolution be sent to each commissioner of the Cannabis Control Commission and the Somerville Licensing Commission.