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BOSTON, MA

Boston City Council
Committee on Jobs, Wages & Workforce Development
Frank Baker, Chair

Report of Committee Chair

December 12, 2016

Dear Councilors:

The Boston City Council's Committee on Jobs, Wages & Workforce Development was referred the following:

Docket # 1206 Order for a hearing to discuss strategies for ensuring equity in marijuana licensing.

This matter was sponsored by Boston City Councilor Ayanna Pressley and referred to the Committee on September 14, 2016. The Committee on Jobs, Wages, and Workforce Development held a public hearing on October 24, 2016, and a working session was held on December 6, 2016.

During the hearing and subsequent working session, the Committee heard specific recommendations from a wide range of local and national policy leaders, cannabis industry business representatives, patient advocates, and community stakeholders.

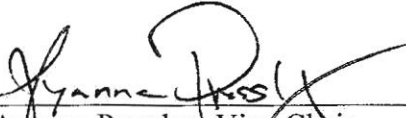
The attached special report of the Committee summarizes the recommendations for developing an equitable recreational marijuana licensing system in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

As Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee on Jobs, Wages & Workforce Development, we ask the City Clerk to submit a copy of the attached report to Mayor Martin Walsh, Governor Charlie Baker, State Treasurer Deborah Goldberg, Senate President Stanley Rosenberg, Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo, and the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus, and that a copy of it be **PLACED ON FILE.**



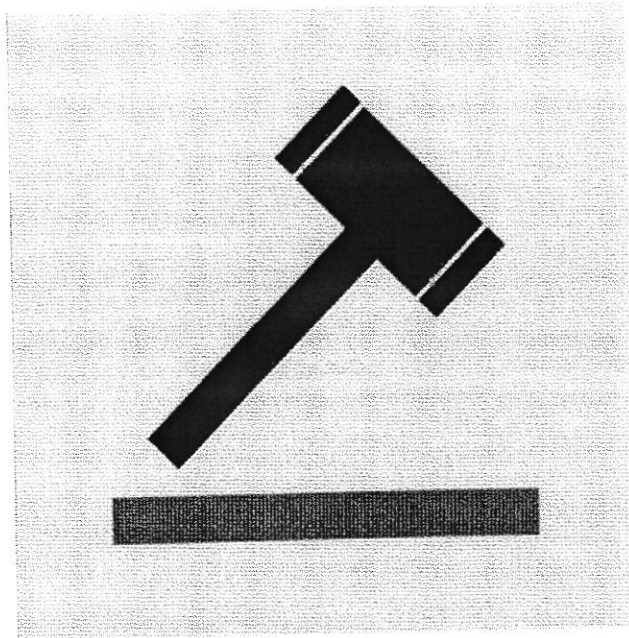
Frank Baker, Chair
Jobs, Wages & Workforce Development



Ayanna Pressley, Vice-Chair
Jobs, Wages & Workforce Development

Boston City Council Committee on Jobs, Wages, and Workforce Development

Recommendations for Ensuring Racial Equity in Marijuana Licensing



Report to the Members of the Boston City Council, Mayor Walsh, Governor Charlie Baker, State Treasurer Deborah Goldberg, Senate President Stanley Rosenberg, Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo, and the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus

December 14, 2016

Presented for the Committee by Councilor Ayanna Pressley, Vice-Chair

CONTEXT

On November 8th, 2016 Ballot Question 4: “An Initiative Petition for A Law Relative to the Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana” was passed by voters in Massachusetts 54% to 46%. This law directs the State Treasurer’s Office to establish a Cannabis Control Commission to oversee the licensing of all recreational marijuana businesses, and includes a provision - the first of its kind in the nation – requiring the Commission to develop “procedures and policies to promote and encourage full participation in the regulated marijuana industry by people from communities that have previously been disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition and enforcement and to positively impact those communities.”

While there is no publicly available data on diversity in retail and dispensary ownership and workforce nationally, extensive interviews conducted by BuzzFeed reporter Amanda Chicago Lewis, paints the grim picture that of the 25 states that have legalized recreational or medical marijuana, fewer than one percent of licensed dispensaries and retail stores are owned and operated by people of color.¹

This year, Massachusetts and California became the first states to pass legalization laws that prevent those with low-level drug offenses from being prohibited from job and ownership opportunities in this emerging industry.² This is a critical first-step to righting the wrongs of the failed War on Drugs that disproportionately impacts people of color and low-income individuals.

Yet no state has passed and successfully implemented laws or regulations to ensure racial equity in workforce and enterprise opportunities in the marijuana industry. Massachusetts is once again poised to be a leader.

As such, the Boston City Council Committee on Jobs, Wages, and Workforce Development convened one public hearing on October 24th, 2016 and one public Working Session on December 6th, 2016, to gather recommendations to ensure racial equity in marijuana licensing. These matters were sponsored by Councilor At-Large Ayanna Pressley, founder and Chair of the Committee on Healthy Women, Families, and Communities, and Vice-Chair of the Committee on Jobs, Wages, and Workforce Development.

¹ Lewis, Amanda Chicago, March 2016. “How Black People Are Being Shut Out of America’s Weed Boom: Whitewashing the Green Rush. BuzzFeed. https://www.buzzfeed.com/amandachicagolewis/americas-white-only-weed-boom?utm_term=.qk76A5pQr#.xmllkjDo6

² Massachusetts Question 4 language as passed: (4) an individual who will be a controlling person of the proposed marijuana establishment has not been convicted of a felony or convicted of an offense in another state that would be a felony in the commonwealth, *except a prior conviction solely for a marijuana offense or solely for a violation of section 34 of chapter 94C of the General Laws, unless the offense involved distribution of a controlled substance, including marijuana, to a minor.* (bold and italics added)