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September 17, 2016

Senate Judiciary Committee
Lesil McGuire, Chair
716 West 4th Avenue, #515
Anchorage AK 99501

House Judiciary Committee
Gabrielle LeDoux, Chair
716 West 4th Avenue, #611
Anchorage AK 99501

Re: Cannabis Social Clubs

Dear Ms. McGuire and Ms. LeDoux,

I attended the joint hearing that you held earlier this week, and want to submit a few written comments. I have been told that the cannabis social club in Anchorage has now been shut down, which I view as unjust. I visited the club once. It provided a nice venue for adults to get together to use cannabis, the people were very peaceful and friendly, and the club should not have been closed.

Prior to commenting, I should tell you about my views and experience with cannabis. I do not use the product. I smoked a few joints during college in the 1960's, but not since then. Cannabis was different then. I also have never partaken of anything made of concentrated oils or edibles. When I visited the Anchorage social club, it was as a learning experience only. I consumed nothing at that time, and have no intention of doing so.

Since I believe that adults should have the right to use cannabis if they desired to do so, and that people should not be subject to a jail sentence for using cannabis, I got involved to a large degree in the two cannabis initiatives in Alaska. I participated in writing both initiatives, and in the signature gathering and campaigns for passage. Based on this experience, I would make the following comments.

The purpose of the initiative was to provide protection for people who needed to use cannabis for medical reasons and desired to use it recreationally. This purpose should be interpreted broadly. Certain logical exceptions and limitations were also included in the initiatives. These should be interpreted narrowly. The most relevant one at this point is the prohibition against the use of cannabis in public places.

No one who worked on the initiative would ever have thought that cannabis social clubs, where members would get together for a social experience including cannabis, were public places where the use of cannabis was prohibited. A "public" place is a place such as a street, sidewalk, park, bus, or government building, where people went for other purposes. In that type of place, children might be present and people who were there for other purposes might have been bothered by the smell or simply the use of cannabis. Cannabis social clubs, however, are different. Children are not there and the people who enter a cannabis social club are aware that

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cannabis is going to be used there.

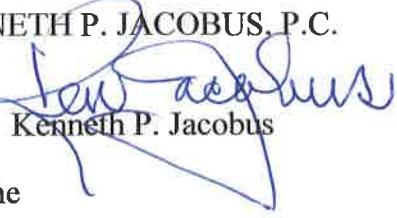
Ms. LeDoux's limited interpretation of "public" place is correct. I would suggest that the Legislature should honor the broad purpose of protecting the medical and recreational use of cannabis, and enact whatever changes to the law are necessary to accomplish this end. Very clearly, cannabis social clubs should be allowed so that consumers have a place to get together and socialize over cannabis.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

KENNETH P. JACOBUS, P.C.

By


Kenneth P. Jacobus

KPJ:me