



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anthony H. Palumbo

Palumbo Votes No On Marijuana Legislation

ANTHONY H. PALUMBO March 30, 2021

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Suffolk Lawmaker Raises Serious Concerns Over Bill's Impact on Roadway Safety, addiction services and quality of life in our region

Senator Anthony Palumbo (R,C-New Suffolk) today voted against legislation to legalize marijuana in New York State and raised his concerns over the bill's potential impact on roadway safety, the effects on young children, the demand on addiction services and the quality of life throughout New York State.

“The negative consequences of legalizing recreational marijuana far outweigh any

revenue gain for the state. This bill will have an adverse impact on the health of our communities, diminish our quality of life here on the East End of Long Island and will make our roads and highways more dangerous,” said Senator Palumbo. “Just like the disastrous Bail and Discovery Laws, this legislation was crafted without input from New York’s District Attorneys’ offices and law enforcement. As a result, I fear our communities will be affected by the unintended consequences of this bill for years to come.”

Senator Palumbo noted that his main opposition to the legislation relates to law enforcement's ability to keep our streets and highways safe under the new legislation. Currently, there are only 343 Drug Recognition Experts (DRE's) throughout the entire state of New York. These specially trained officers are the only way to determine if a driver is impaired due to cannabis.

“THC can be ingested in several different forms, some being very difficult for law enforcement to detect,” said Senator Palumbo. “I am very concerned that people driving under the influence of marijuana could seriously injure or kill innocent drivers and escape penalties if we don’t have enough trained Drug Recognition Experts on our local police forces. Yet unsurprisingly, there was no funding provided in this legislation for these officers or additional training.”

The legislation also expunges criminal records for those solely convicted of marijuana drug crimes and vacates sentences for people serving time for marijuana sale or possession. As of today, out of the 31,342 inmates in our state prison system, only 21 are behind bars for the sale or possession of marijuana as their top offense.

“This is a bad bill for New York and a continuation of reckless policies coming out of Albany that seek to put social justice ahead of the health, safety and wellbeing of law abiding

New Yorkers,” concluded Palumbo.