

1 **Endorse and Support the Passage of Initiative**
2 **Measure No. 502 to Legalize, Tax, and Regulate**
3 **Marijuana for Adults 21 and Over**
4

5 **WHEREAS** thousands of Washington adults are arrested, prosecuted, and convicted for
6 simple marijuana possession each year, wasting millions of dollars in police, court, and
7 jail resources that could be redirected to more important public safety priorities;

8
9 **WHEREAS** marijuana is Washington’s second biggest cash crop and could generate
10 hundreds of millions of dollars in new tax revenues for the state if brought out of the
11 illicit market, regulated, produced by licensed Washington businesses, and taxed;

12
13 **WHEREAS** legalizing marijuana and bringing it under regulatory control would have a
14 significant impact on the illicit profits supporting violent criminal organizations;

15
16 **WHEREAS** simple marijuana possession charges now account for fully half of all drug
17 arrests in Washington;

18
19 **WHEREAS** possession of even a small amount of marijuana for personal use is a
20 criminal charge requiring court appearances and carrying a mandatory minimum
21 sentence of twenty-four hours in jail and a \$250 fine, plus court costs and attorneys’
22 fees;

23
24 **WHEREAS** these short-term consequences disrupt lives and create financial hardship
25 for many;

26
27 **WHEREAS** even a misdemeanor conviction for marijuana possession can result in long-
28 term consequences like loss of employment, loss of housing, loss of federal financial aid
29 for college, termination of child visitation rights, and deportation and exclusion of legal
30 immigrants;

31
32 **WHEREAS** although white Washingtonians use marijuana at slightly higher rates,
33 people of color are more frequently arrested, charged, and convicted for marijuana
34 possession, resulting in a disproportionate impact on the communities struggling most
35 to achieve social and economic justice;

36
37 **WHEREAS** in Washington, an African American is three times as likely to be arrested,
38 three times as likely to be charged, and three times as likely to be convicted for a
39 marijuana offense as a white Washingtonian, despite the fact that whites use marijuana
40 at slightly higher rates;

41

42 **WHEREAS** evidence-based prevention programs, community support for at-risk
43 families, education, and healthcare are more cost-effective strategies for reducing the
44 risk of substance abuse than incarcerating people for marijuana use and saddling them
45 with criminal records;

46
47 **WHEREAS** Initiative Measure No. 502 will legalize, tax, and regulate the purchase and
48 possession of small amounts of marijuana for adults aged 21 and over;

49
50 **WHEREAS** Initiative Measure No. 502 will authorize the Washington State Liquor
51 Control Board to license private individuals to produce, refine, and sell marijuana in
52 marijuana-only stores, and to adopt regulations addressing safety, security, sanitation,
53 quality control, labeling, and advertising;

54
55 **WHEREAS** Initiative Measure No. 502 will generate an estimated \$215 million in new
56 tax revenues each year, with roughly \$80 million going to the state general fund and
57 local budgets, and \$135 million earmarked for substance abuse prevention, research and
58 education, healthcare, and programs for at-risk youth;

59
60 **WHEREAS** Initiative Measure No. 502 will create a per se DUI threshold of 5
61 nanograms per milliliter of whole blood for the psychoactive marijuana component
62 THC, and this per se limit will not apply to the non-psychoactive marijuana metabolite
63 carboxy-THC that can appear in blood and urine tests for days or even weeks after last
64 use; and

65
66 **WHEREAS** Initiative Measure No. 502 will not change Washington's medical marijuana
67 law, but it will provide patients new protection from arrest for possessing marijuana
68 and new access to licensed, regulated sources of quality-controlled and Washington-
69 produced marijuana;

70
71 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the Washington State Democratic Central
72 Committee, endorse and stand in support of Initiative Measure No. 502 to legalize, tax,
73 and regulate marijuana for adults 21 and over.

74

75
76 Submitted by the 30th Legislative District Democrats to the Washington State
77 Democratic Central Committee for consideration at its September 17, 2011 meeting in
78 Bellingham. (Date Submitted 9/8/2011)

79
80 Submitted by the 39th Legislative District Democrats to the Washington State
81 Democratic Central Committee for consideration at its September 17, 2011 meeting in
82 Bellingham. (Date Submitted 9/8/2011)