2022 RES-101
AUTHORIZING TWO ADVISORY REFERENDUM QUESTIONS
ON LEGALIZING MARIJUANA IN WISCONSIN

Since 2012, 19 states and Washington, D.C., have legalized marijuana for adults over the age of 21. And 38 states and Washington, D.C., have legalized medical marijuana. A majority of Americans now have legal access to marijuana, either for medical or recreational uses, or both. This means that Wisconsin is increasingly becoming an island of prohibition.

Legalization of marijuana would have numerous positive benefits for our state, including addressing racial disparities in our criminal justice system, increasing state revenue, and affording people the ability to access the medicine they need.

Marijuana prohibition laws in the early 1900's were rooted in white supremacy and racist in their application, and in the first full year after the Marijuana Tax Act was passed, Black individuals were three times more likely than white individuals to be arrested for violating narcotic drug laws.

Disparities in arrest data continue today with Black individuals over four times more likely to be arrested for marijuana offenses than white individuals in Wisconsin, according to 2019 data.

These arrests, and the criminal records they create, lead to significant societal harm related to housing access, employment, and long-term economic security.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors supports the legalization of marijuana in Wisconsin and the expungement of previous marijuana-related offenses, and places the following two separate advisory referendum questions on the ballot for the November 8, 2022 election:

Advisory Referendum Question #1:
"Should marijuana be legalized, taxed, and regulated in the same manner as alcohol for adults 21 years of age or older?"

Advisory Referendum Question #2:
"Should all records of previous convictions for marijuana possession in small amounts in the State of Wisconsin be expunged?"

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Dane County Clerk shall take all necessary steps to implement this resolution.