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2018 RES-064
REFERENDUM ON LEGALIZING CANNABIS

A resolution providing for an advisory referendum on the November 6, 2018, election ballot to measure public opinion on allowing adults 21 years of age and older to engage in the personal use of marijuana, while also regulating commercial marijuana-related activities, and imposing a tax on the sale of marijuana.

WHEREAS, criminalizing marijuana use has failed to curb its use and more than 100 million Americans say they have used marijuana; and

WHEREAS, 59 percent of Wisconsinites in a 2016 poll said that marijuana should be “fully legalized and regulated like alcohol”, and recent polls show a majority of Americans favor legalization of adult recreational use of marijuana; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin State Legislature has failed to act on legislation to legalize and regulate marijuana and has not allowed hearings on such legislation; and

WHEREAS, an estimate by the Congressional Research Service suggests that replacing marijuana prohibition with a system of taxation and regulation could yield \$6.8 billion in federal excise taxes alone; and

WHEREAS, Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington have legalized adult personal use of marijuana and regulate the production, distribution, and sale of marijuana, and Vermont and the District of Columbia have legalized limited personal possession and cultivation of marijuana by adults; and

WHEREAS, legalizing and taxing marijuana could significantly increase state and local revenue; and

WHEREAS, the time law enforcement spends enforcing existing marijuana laws and ordinances negatively impacts the time available to solve more serious crimes and apprehend more dangerous criminals; and

WHEREAS, African Americans are disproportionately arrested for marijuana use and possession, continuing a pattern of racially biased justice system outcomes with lifelong negative impacts on those convicted and on their families; and

WHEREAS, marijuana prohibition makes product quality control and sales regulation impossible, leaving marijuana sellers free to target children as potential customers and to peddle potentially adulterated products; and

WHEREAS, the lack of a dispute resolution system for disputes in the illicit marijuana trade inevitably leads to violence as disputes arise;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors places the following advisory referendum on the ballot for the November 2018 election:

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

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