



City of Pittsburgh

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414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Text File

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Bill No: 2016-0304, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, in Pennsylvania, residents are arrested twice as often for possessing marijuana than for heroin and cocaine combined; and

WHEREAS, every year across Pennsylvania, roughly 20,000 adults and juveniles are arrested for possessing less than 30 grams of marijuana; and

WHEREAS, merely being charged with a controlled substances violation can result in the loss of employment and housing opportunities, especially public housing opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the expungement procedure is lengthy and financially burdensome. Failure to properly expunge a cannabis possessory offense will result in said offense remaining on a person's criminal history despite the charge having been resolved as a summary offense; and

WHEREAS, racial minorities, predominantly black males, are charged with minor possessory offenses more often than their white colleagues despite similar rates of usage; and

WHEREAS, Police bureaus across the state have limited resources that should not be utilized for the enforcement of minor cannabis possessory offenses; and

WHEREAS, many recreational cannabis consumers are productive citizens for whom even a controlled substances offense can result in loss of employment, housing and other collateral consequences. Making cannabis possessory offense the lowest law enforcement priority will reduce law enforcement expenditures and permit limited resources to be focused on more serious violent crimes; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of States and Cities have recently passed laws as it pertains to the decriminalization of small amounts of marijuana possessed for non-medical personal use. In 2012 the City of Chicago moved to decriminalize small amounts allowing police to issue tickets instead of making an arrest. In 2014 Washington D.C. passed a similar ordinance providing for a \$25.00 fine for possession of a small amount; and

WHEREAS, the City of Pittsburgh recently introduced and approved legislation decriminalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana, allowing officers to issue a ticket instead of making an arrest; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that it is the hope of the citizens of Pittsburgh that Allegheny County decriminalizes the possession of small amounts of marijuana.