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TOWARDS A SANE MARIJUANA POLICY FOR OKLAHOMA AND AMERICA

By Jackson Lahmeyer

Since the passage of state question 788, Oklahoma has experienced the boom of a billion dollar industry creating around 45,000 jobs in our state. At this point, 47 States now have some form of medical cannabis program. Unfortunately, that boom has also flooded our State with operations led by organized crime cartels. While Oklahoma is making progress against bad actors, we need action at the federal level, now. Lack of action has allowed criminal operators to move from state to state for over a decade, regardless of if the system is one of over regulation and high taxes like California, or a free market system like Oklahoma. Being criminals, they ignore whatever state laws exist. This will continue without substantial federal action.

As a Pastor, I have never used marijuana. However, the people of our state and nation overwhelmingly support its use for medicine. Our Government must respect this, but take action to ensure their safety and our national security. In Oklahoma, we have seen first-hand the problems created by our federal officials failing to act on this issue. States are left to fend for themselves against powerful crime syndicates who exploit new state laws. In fact, these criminal organizations are funneling money overseas to our greatest geopolitical adversary, China. How can we fight off this external threat, while allowing it to exist in our own backyard?



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Beyond this clear and present danger, there are other real issues with marijuana that must be addressed immediately. Legitimate businesses are denied access to banking, this forces them to deal mostly in cash making them targets for robbery and murder. Businesses should also be allowed to deduct normal expenses in tax filings, which is currently disallowed. This increases their costs making them less competitive against illicit market forces. People are forced to be dependent on big pharma for health issues that may be better treated with plant based medicine. We need federal action that respects a state's right to govern its own program, doesn't overburden business or consumers with costs and fees, and provides resources to take action against the bad actors. There is actually precedent for this at the federal level.

In 2018, the Farm Bill legalized production of Industrial Hemp. Both hemp and marijuana are the same plant, cannabis. The difference is a legal definition, hemp is cannabis grown with less than 0.3% THC and marijuana is cannabis grown with more than 0.3% THC. Failure by the current administration has allowed for hemp to be concentrated into marijuana after being grown and legally sold online in all 50 states. We need to move swiftly to address cannabis policy as a whole. Nothing less than national security and public safety are on the line.

My opponent, James Lankford, fought hard for SQ788, the Medical Marijuana Legalization Initiative, to be rejected by the people of Oklahoma. In fact, Lankford WENT ON RECORD with his thoughts of what a medical marijuana program in Oklahoma would do to our State. None of the wise prognostications of Mr. Lankford have come



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true. In fact, like with other issues, fear, uncertainty, and doubt seem to be the go to stance of “look away” Lankford.

Last week the US House of Representatives voted to decriminalize the possession of marijuana. Since Oklahoma has legalized medicinal marijuana I don't think possession is a federal crime. I would vote in the US Senate for this house-passed measure. I am calling on Senator Lankford to tell us how he intends to vote. If elected, I will bring the Oklahoma Standard to Washington and work to take this issue head on, unlike James Lankford who continues to look away from these problems and is complicit in the Biden administration's failure and broken promise to address cannabis.

Jackson Lahmeyer is the Pastor of Sheridan Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma and a Republican Candidate for the US Senate