



Las Cruces State Rep. to introduce bill legalizing social use of marijuana

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State Representative Bill McCamley, (D) Las Cruces, wants the State of New Mexico to legalize the social use of cannabis.

McCamley is proposing a bill during the upcoming legislative session, which begins in seven days. If cannabis is legalized, McCamley said, it would greatly boost the economy, create jobs and boost funding for law enforcement and education.

The state rep. said there would be a 15% tax on marijuana, which could generate in between \$60-70 million for the state. McCamley said 40 percent would go toward education.

McCamley acknowledged there could still be issues at the federal level. For example, employers could still conduct drug tests on employees. He said when passing through border patrol, drivers could be stopped and possibly arrested if found to be in possession of recreational marijuana.

McCamley plans to introduce The Cannabis Revenue and Freedom Act January 11, 2017 at the State Capitol in Santa Fe. He said if passed at the state level, individual cities and counties would still be able to vote on whether to accept it.

In a news release, McCamley cited information from the Cato Institute, which states New Mexico police agencies, courts, and prisons spend \$33 million enforcing cannabis laws every year. "This money will be freed up for use in enforcing real crimes," the news release states.

Governor Susana Martinez has widely criticized the recreational use of marijuana. ABC-7 reached out to the governor's office for comment and is waiting to hear back.

House Republicans have killed the proposal twice before. Opponents fear legalizing marijuana could lead to a high potential for abuse.