



YES ON 1

Dear Colleague,

On November 8, citizens of our state will have the opportunity to vote on Question 1, an initiative to regulate and tax marijuana for recreational use for adults 21 and older. We write as fellow Maine clergy to encourage your support for this measure.

Our overriding goal is an environment that best serves all of our citizens, especially our youth. We are convinced that taxing and regulating marijuana, rather than banning it, better serves this end.

Our view agrees with, but moves beyond, familiar arguments that marijuana tax and regulation will:

- Limit the exposure of our young people to adulterated substances sold by unscrupulous dealers;
- Reduce the contact of those who buy marijuana with those selling far more dangerous drugs;
- Enable law enforcement to redirect time and resources to higher priority targets; and
- Generate state revenue and jobs.

These are important reasons. But there are additional concerns that speak to our role as clergy.

A sensible system of taxation and regulation will facilitate our talking more openly and honestly as parents and moral leaders with our youth about the choices they face and those that we make as adults. At a minimum, it will do away with the perceived hypocrisy of banning marijuana while using alcohol, a far more dangerous substance.

It will move us beyond the simplistic “Just Say No” mentality that fails to recognize the complex causes of addiction, both individual and societal. It will keep us from assuming, if only unwittingly, that banning marijuana for everyone will solve the problem of addiction.

Question 1 will enable us to distinguish, with the force of law, between marijuana use before the age of 21, which is harmful and dangerous, and later use, which, for most individuals, is much less so.

Our faith traditions at their best do not seek to shape personal behavior by imposing prohibitions. One does not have to use—or even approve—of marijuana to see that our current laws do not serve us well and, in fact, may actually undermine our efforts to promote responsible decision-making by our youth.

As clergy we ask that you sign the enclosed card indicating your support for the Yes on 1 campaign. Please join us in this effort.

Sincerely,

Rev. Jill Saxby, Unitarian Universalist, Cape Elizabeth

Rev. Philip Devenish, United Church of Christ, Hancock

Rev. Marvin Ellison, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Portland

Rev. Edward Campbell, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Scarborough

Rev. Stephen Swecker, United Methodist Church, North Berwick

Rev. Matthew McDonald, United Church of Christ, Bangor