

Neill Franklin, served with the Maryland and Baltimore police forces for 34 years, and is now executive director of [Law Enforcement Action Partnership \(LEAP\)](#). The following is a transcript of his testimony provided at September 6, 2017 at [a joint House-Senate committee hearing to elicit the views of law enforcement](#).

Madam Chair, Senate and House members, my name is Neill Franklin, a retired major of the Maryland State Police and Baltimore police forces where I spent 34 years serving the great state of Maryland. I am currently the executive director of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership, an international non-profit organization of law enforcement professionals established in 2002 with a mission of advancing justice and public safety solutions. We have assembled a speakers bureau and partnerships with many law enforcement leaders and agencies around the globe and we operate in five basic silos - police community relations, incarceration & criminalization, drug policy, harm reduction and global issues. The key to what we do revolves around sound public safety policy.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak briefly with you regarding why thousands of our members support regulated and taxed systems for adult marijuana use. As mentioned, drug policy is one of our key silos, and in learning from past policy failures, we strive to develop sound policy moving forward. Most of my 34 year career has been spent in drug and criminal investigation. I've worked undercover, supervised narcotics enforcement teams and led the bureau of drug and criminal enforcement for half of my state, that's 14 individual task forces. After decades of dedicated work, like many of my comrades across this great nation, we have no good news to report enforcing policies that were proven to be extremely problematic from day one. We should have learned from alcohol prohibition, where we attempted to prohibit another drug commonly used by consenting adults. If any state should be familiar with that disaster, it's the great state of Illinois, the home of Al Capone.

According to federal researchers, around 750,000 Illinoisans consume as much as 327 metric tons of marijuana each year. Only about 17,000 of these consumers participate in the state's regulated medical cannabis market, the remaining 733,000 consumers purchase their cannabis from the illicit market. As such, we are funding organized crime syndicates and other criminals with billions every year. As with alcohol prohibition, we have driven a very large profit-generating industry underground and into the shadows, where marijuana peddlers battle each other in the streets of Chicago and other cities for marketshare. Neighborhoods under siege, cops at war, tens of thousands of arrest (most for mere possession), disparity issues where in this state blacks are 7 times more likely to be arrested for possession than their caucasian counterparts, and this leads to very poor police community relations. And there's more... like corruption and valuable bed space in our local jails that we need for violent offenders. At \$143 per day in the Cook County jail when someone can't make bail, that's \$1,001 per week, roughly \$4,004 per month and \$52,052 per year. Money that could be better spent elsewhere.

But Chicago has had marijuana decriminalization in place for a few years now. Well, the first full year results of this new policy of making it a citable offense for possession resulted in only 7%

of marijuana possession cases being cited. 93% resulted in an actual arrest. Maryland has had a similar law in place for a few years and our arrest numbers also remain high with the very same disparity issues. It's not a solution.

Adult use markets work. Gov. Hickenlooper of Colorado, now in favor of adult use legal regulation, reports that what people thought would negatively happen did not. He also reports that since regulation, they've experienced a 75% drop in possession arrests, from 6,300 down to 1,450.

I've been to every state where we now have operational legalized adult use regulation and I have spoken to the street cops in Washington State, Colorado, Oregon and Washington DC, and the street cops largely agree that this should have occurred long ago. They are now positioned to focus more on crimes of violence (rapes, robberies, murder, crimes against children and more). The good cops welcome the guardian opportunity. My professional opinion is that corrupt cops probably don't like the policy change.

Unfortunately in policing we have become obsessed with numbers and too many of my law enforcement comrades believe that more arrests translate to good policing. That may be true when arresting violent offenders, but not in this case and marijuana possession arrests are the easiest to make. Fact - police community relations improve when move away from mass arrests enforcement and focus on violent crime. And when those relationships improve, citizens develop trust in their police officers and contact them with valuable information on violent offenders, resulting in more arrests of violent offenders and stronger cases.

In closing, this is smart for improving public safety from many different directions. We are about public safety solutions and the policies needed to make it happen. This is one of those policies. Bring this market out of the dangerous shadows, into the light and under the law. It is imperative that we regulate this industry and you can't regulate a prohibited activity. We need to do it the citizens and we need to do it for the future of policing.