

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 104

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator RONALD L. RICE
District 28 (Essex)

SYNOPSIS

Urges states to support cannabis equity programs.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** urging states to support cannabis
2 equity programs.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, Thirty-three states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico,
5 and Guam have all adopted laws allowing legal access to cannabis;
6 and
7 **WHEREAS**, Eleven states and the District of Columbia have adopted
8 laws allowing for the adult recreational use of cannabis; and
9 **WHEREAS**, Over 650,000 Americans were arrested for cannabis-
10 related offenses in 2017, and 90 percent of those were arrested for
11 mere possession; and
12 **WHEREAS**, The burdens of arrests, convictions, and long-term
13 collateral consequences arising from a conviction fell
14 disproportionately on Black and Latino populations because
15 cannabis was illegal; and
16 **WHEREAS**, People who are Black or Latino make up nearly 47 percent
17 of those arrested for drug law violations despite making up 31.5
18 percent of the American population; and
19 **WHEREAS**, Drug arrests and convictions have had a devastating
20 impact on communities across the United States, particularly in
21 communities of color; and
22 **WHEREAS**, Persons convicted of drug-related offenses and their
23 families suffer the long-term consequences; and
24 **WHEREAS**, Black and Latino individuals have a more difficult time
25 entering newly created adult-use cannabis markets, due in part, to a
26 lack of access to capital, business space, technical support and
27 regulatory compliance assistance; and
28 **WHEREAS**, Only six states currently recognize social equity within the
29 regulated cannabis industry and offer programs or support for
30 cannabis equity; and
31 **WHEREAS**, Cannabis equity programs are necessary to reduce barriers
32 to entering the cannabis industry for persons and communities most
33 impacted; and
34 **WHEREAS**, Cannabis equity programs provide a wide range of services
35 and resources such as technical assistance between state and local
36 governments, financial support, priority processing of licenses,
37 licensing fee waivers and deferrals, and other help for owners and
38 employers from communities most harmed by the decades long war
39 on drugs; and
40 **WHEREAS**, Cannabis equity programs help ensure that business
41 ownership and employment are diverse, reflective of the local
42 demographics and inclusive to all; and
43 **WHEREAS**, Support for local equity programs will not only help
44 diversify the emerging cannabis market, it will also improve the
45 growth of small businesses and directly benefit low-income,
46 disadvantaged communities; and
47 **WHEREAS**, While some states prioritize social equity within the
48 cannabis industry, there is still a critical need for further assistance

SCR104 RICE

3

1 to those faced with the greatest challenges to licensure and the
2 legalized, regulated market; and
3 **WHEREAS**, Cannabis equity programs increase public health and
4 safety by encouraging individuals and groups that have been or may
5 be operating illegally to enter the regulated marketplace; and
6 **WHEREAS**, Cannabis equity programs will increase the opportunities
7 for more individuals to participate and contribute to their state and
8 local economies' legal market, and support owners and operators so
9 they have a chance to sustain a successful business; now, therefore,

10

11 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate of the State of New Jersey (the*
12 *General Assembly concurring):*

13

14 1. The New Jersey Senate urges all states that have legalized
15 cannabis in some form to support cannabis equity programs.

16

17 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
18 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the
19 Secretary of the Senate to the President of the United States Senate,
20 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, each member of
21 Congress elected thereto from New Jersey and the presiding officer
22 of each house of each state legislature in the United States.

23

24

25 STATEMENT

26

27 This concurrent resolution urges all states that have legalized
28 cannabis in some form to support cannabis equity programs.