

NATIVE ROOTS

CANNABIS CO.

Colorado House of Representatives Finance Committee:

Native Roots Cannabis Co. is grateful for the opportunity to submit this letter as written testimony in support of HB20-1424, concerning social equity licenses in regulated marijuana. Thank you to Representatives James Coleman and Matt Soper, Senators Julie Gonzales and Vicki Marble, to Governor Polis and the Marijuana Enforcement Division, and to The Color of Cannabis and the rest of the Social Equity coalition that have worked to advance this important legislation during the abbreviated end to the 2020 legislative session.

It is well documented that Colorado's Amendment 64, and the subsequent legislation and regulation of retail marijuana in Colorado, did not expressly provide opportunities for social equity in cannabis and in particular, those communities of color that were most harmed by failed cannabis prohibition and the War on Drugs. While Colorado has done much right in the way of regulating adult use cannabis, we simply have not done enough to promote equity within the industry.

HB20-1424 is a clear opportunity for us to begin correcting for this error in Colorado's cannabis legalization history. In particular, we have heard clearly from groups working to address social equity in cannabis that this definition is a definitive starting point for addressing access to ownership within the cannabis industry. By building upon 2019's Accelerator Program, we believe this definition provides further opportunity for relationships between existing licensed marijuana businesses and Social Equity Licensees, as well as new opportunities for social equity applicants to access ownership outside of the Accelerator Program.

Finally, although COVID 19 and the subsequent budget impacts have not made it possible to allocate resources this year, we note this legislation provides for future financial incentives for Accelerator and Social Equity Licensees. We have heard from equity advocates that access to capital is the single largest barrier preventing ownership, and this legislation provides for future opportunity to provide funding for qualifying applicants.

Please vote yes on HB20-1424.

Sincerely,

Shannon Fender

Director of Public Affairs

Native Roots Cannabis Co.

About Native Roots Cannabis Co.

Native Roots is a vertically integrated cannabis company based in Denver, CO. Native Roots has 20 dispensary locations across 11 unique Colorado jurisdictions, serving thousands of adult consumers every day and the state's largest number of registered patient members. With over a decade of experience in providing cannabis to patients and adult consumers, Native Roots has won national recognition for its sustainable business practices, retail design, high quality products, and employment practices.

SUBMITTED WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Committee	House Finance				
Meeting Date	06/10/2020 Upon Adjournment				
Bill Number	First Name	Last Name	Position	Representing	Testifying Text of Testimony
HB20-1424	Emily	Swallow	For	Self	Submitted text Creating a social equity definition will be an important action by our state to (1) Support Social equity in the cannabis industry and provide a level playing field for those convicted of marijuana offenses prior to its legalization in Colorado; (2) Provide guidance to local governments who are currently exploring such definitions themselves; and, (3) promote consistency of this definition across the state.
HB20-1424	Jennifer	Curtin	For	Self	Submitted text Creating a social equity definition is an important action by our state to (1) Support social equity in the cannabis industry and provide a level playing field for those convicted of marijuana offenses prior to its legalization in Colorado; (2) Provide guidance to local governments who are currently exploring such definitions themselves; and, (3) promote consistency of this definition across the state. PASS THIS!
HB20-1424	Jordan	Wellington	For	VSS and Vicente Sederberg	Submitted text Dear House Finance Committee, Please accept this written testimony on behalf of VS Strategies and Vicente Sederberg. We urge the committee to support and advance HB-1424. Colorado has long served as an example for the rest of the country on cannabis policy. We were the first to regulate medical cannabis. The first to legalize adult-use. We are recognized across the country as having the most evolved, thoughtful, and nuanced regulatory system. However, we have sadly fallen behind other states in promoting opportunity in our cannabis industry. Last year, the General Assembly created an accelerator program for social equity candidates to help promote entrepreneurship among marginalized communities in Colorado’s cannabis industry. The program was an important first step in helping Colorado catch up to the rest of the country in a critical policy area where we have lagged behind for far too long. HB-1424 enhances the accelerator program by providing a clear definition for those who qualify as social equity applicants. These definitions will help the implementation of the program and provide a guide to local governments seeking consistency in eligibility across multiple jurisdictions. The bill also adjusts certain restrictive language to create viability for business models that fall outside the scope of the original bill, such as franchises. HB-1424 is a good bill that will help promote equity in Colorado’s growing cannabis industry. It was crafted by social equity advocates with valuable input from the Marijuana Enforcement Division. We are proud to support their efforts. We hope that you as well and vote yes today. Thank you, Jordan Wellington VP of Policy, VS Strategies Of Counsel, Vicente Sederberg

HB20-1424	Kara	Miller	For	Marijuana Industry Group	Submitted text	<p>MIG Supports 1424.</p> <p>The War on Drugs has been devastating for communities of color. Now that marijuana is legal in Colorado, MIG thinks it is crucial to remove barriers to entry to the legal market for those have been unfairly impacted by the war on drugs.</p> <p>A social equity conversation cannot happen without a working definition of social equity. MIG believes that 1424 is an appropriate platform to codify it.</p> <p>Many conversations are happening now at the state and local level around social equity and it is important for stakeholders to have a common definition of social equity in order to continue to make progress improving access in the licensed marijuana community.</p> <p>We hope you can support this measure and want to ensure to the members that MIG will continue to engage in the rule making and all appropriate venues to advance the conversations and issue moving forward.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration!</p> <p>Sincerely-</p> <p>Kara Miller, on behalf of Marijuana Industry Group</p>
HB20-1424	Marcus	Najera	For	Self	Submitted text	<p>The time is now for reform, the country and current protests are proof that reform is needed in many industries, not just for the police.</p> <p>Considering the fact that most marijuana arrests are disproportionately for people of color, I deplore you to help correct this injustice. Allow people of color the same opportunities for loans, small businesses and building the community as a whole.</p>
HB20-1424	Michael	Boylan	For	Self	Submitted text	<p>Creating a social equity definition will be an important action by our state to</p> <p>(1) Support Social equity in the cannabis industry and provide a level playing field for those convicted of marijuana offenses prior to its legalization in Colorado</p> <p>(2) Provide guidance to local governments who are currently exploringsuch definitions themselves</p> <p>(3) promote consistency of this definition across the state.</p>
HB20-1424	Michale	Ourso	For	Self	Submitted text	<p>I have been in the Colorado cannabis industry from 2012-2016, which is when I switched to the Colorado hemp industry until present day. While I started at the bottom with jobs like secretary and budtender, I was quickly promoted to GM and District Managers of 4 stores.</p> <p>In all of my time in the industry, I have never worked under a manager of color, much less an owner. Considering the fact that most marijuana arrests are disproportionately for people of color, I deplore you to help correct this injustice. Also, its the perfect time for this bill codifies a new definition for who qualifies as a social equity licensee in the regulated marijuana industry. This bill sets the stage for creating new economic opportunities and support in the industry for those who have been the most harmed by the War on Drugs and systemically suppressed form participation in the market.</p>
HB20-1424	Samantha	Walsh	For	Simply Pure; Black Brown and Red Badged	Submitted text	<p>In all of my time in the industry, I have never worked under a manager of color, much less an owner. Considering the fact that most marijuana arrests are disproportionately for people of color, I deplore you to help correct this injustice. Also, its the perfect time for this bill codifies a new definition for who qualifies as a social equity licensee in the regulated marijuana industry. This bill sets the stage for creating new economic opportunities and support in the industry for those who have been the most harmed by the War on Drugs and systemically suppressed form participation in the market.</p>