

NORML's Madeline Martinez Says Cannabis Social Consumption Bill SB 639 About Civil Rights



SALEM, Ore. ? January 31, 2019 /[Canna Newswire](#)/ ?]Nearly 10 years after opening the [first cannabis cafe in the United States](#), Oregon NORML ([ornorml.org](#)) executive director Madeline Martinez is appealing directly to legislators in Salem to pass a bill sponsored by Senator Lew Frederick (D-Portland) that would finally legalize her trademark business, [The World Famous Cannabis Cafe](#). Martinez, the only Latina on the board of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws and the executive director of Oregon NORML, played a crucial role in organizing local cannabis advocates to bring about Frederick's legislation, [Senate Bill 639](#).

Martinez says this isn't just an issue of dysfunctional laws that allow adults living or visiting Oregon to purchase cannabis but not legally consume it, it is an issue of discrimination and equal rights.

?This is about equal rights because whenever you pick a certain group and treat them differently that is discrimination. Medical marijuana patients, renters, the poor, people of color and women are often the least likely to not have a safe legal space to consume legally purchased or possessed cannabis,? said Martinez.

Martinez points out that taking direct actions like opening a private social consumption space before public consumption spaces are legal to push the issue into the mainstream discussion and bring into question unjust laws is something that is much easier for white men, but dangerous territory to cross into for a woman of color. As a former corrections officer, Martinez says she knows how the law works, is friendly to law enforcement and firm that actions like hers are what propel the change of bad laws and make the cannabis space more welcoming to marginalized groups.

?You have to be bold, I never asked anyone for permission,? says Martinez. ?When you don't like the laws, you change them. All the gains in movements of social justice are made by people breaking bad laws. I have been called the ?Rosa Parks of Cannabis'.

S.B. 639 is currently [awaiting assignment](#) into a senate committee. If passed it would require the Oregon Liquor Control Commission to regulate social consumption businesses and event spaces, allow for the sale of cannabis in these clubs, tasting tours on farms (similar to wine) and expanded legal cannabis delivery into private and temporary residences (like hotels).

A similar bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives, H.B. 2233. The fundamental difference between the two pieces of legislation is that while S.B. 639 creates a legalized framework for indoor smoking and vaping, H.B. 2233 does not. Martinez says this approach further marginalizes the poor, who are disproportionately punished for public consumption.

?In Oregon, due to the Indoor Clean Air Act, cannabis consumers must find a place outside in the shadows and elements, which is unsafe and has become a social justice issue. Cannabis consumers should be treated with dignity and respect. We are deserving of safe, regulated spaces to consume out of public view. Only S.B. 639 would accomplish this goal,? Martinez concludes.

About Oregon NORML & Women's Alliance

The mission of the Oregon chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) is to further the social justice goals of the marijuana legalization movement post-legalization. Cannabis is legal but still not "normal" in our society; Oregon patients and recreational consumers still risk housing and employment discrimination and loss of custody of their children for choosing to use cannabis legally and there are not safe legal public spaces for social consumption. Oregon NORML believes that although it is legal statewide, conflicts with federal law still threaten the liberties of Oregonian cannabis users. For more information

visit: <http://ornorml.org/>.

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Media Contact

Angela Bacca

Oregon NORML Media Director

angelabacca@gmail.com