

TAKE A STAND FOR SENSIBLE DRUG LAWS!

Stop Lawrence officials from boosting marijuana penalties

Lawrence city commissioners were moving in the right direction when they considered [Ordinance no. 7938](#), which would move marijuana offenses from district court to municipal court. This measure could decrease marijuana arrests, save taxpayer money, and allow police to focus on violent crime. Unfortunately, the commissioners now want to tack on a minimum fine, which could end up raising penalties for marijuana possession – rather than lowering them. We need your help to get the measure back on track.

If you don't live in Lawrence, please forward this message to your friends and family who do. If you do live in Lawrence, there are two things you can do to keep city-level marijuana penalties from being increased.

1. **Call your city commissioners** at the numbers listed below and politely ask them to pass the ordinance without a minimum fine.

Commissioner Mike Rundle (785) 841-7817
Commissioner Sue Hack (785) 842-6608
Commissioner David Schauner (785) 842-7459
Vice-Mayor Mike Amyx (785) 843-3089
Mayor Boog Highberger (785) 843-0995

2. **Show your support** by coming to the commission's hearing on the ordinance on Nov. 29 at 6:35 p.m. in city hall. At the hearing, the floor will be opened for public comment. This is your chance to tell your commissioners in person not to add a minimum fine to the ordinance. And the more people that show up to the meeting, the more commissioners will see how important this issue is to the community. If you can attend, please be sure to dress appropriately.

Proposed by the Lawrence-based Drug Policy Forum of Kansas, the ordinance would move first-time marijuana possession cases to municipal court. The ordinance would direct police officers to give a notice to appear in municipal court to those caught in possession of marijuana rather than arresting them, allowing police more time to focus on violent crime which makes up the majority of charges filed in Lawrence each year. Even more significantly, people prosecuted in municipal court would not have a criminal drug record that would prevent them from receiving federal financial aid under the Higher Education Act.

While the commission supports the measure, these rational approaches to marijuana policy will mean little if a minimum fine is tacked onto the ordinance. Under state law, there is no minimum fine for marijuana possession, meaning the current version of the ordinance could actually increase penalties for marijuana possession.

Please take action now and stop Lawrence city commissioners from turning this positive move toward marijuana policy reform into a step back toward even greater marijuana prohibition.

Thank you for supporting the Drug Policy Forum of Kansas.



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Our mailing address is DPFKS, 941 Kentucky, Lawrence, KS 66044.

The Drug Policy Forum of Kansas promotes debate on innovative policies and approaches to reduce the harms of both drug use and drug prohibition, and education and support for effective public health alternatives to the costly war-on-drugs.

