

To: Steven J. Hoffman, Chairman
CC: Jennifer Flanagan
Britte McBride
Kay Doyle
Shaleen Title

From: Marty Martinez, President and CEO of Mass Mentoring Partnership

Date: October 3rd, 2017

Re: Recreational Marijuana Revenue- Allocation to Youth Development

Mass Mentoring Partnership greatly appreciates the leadership of the Cannabis Control Commission to regulate the recreational use of marijuana after a majority of Massachusetts citizens voted for its legalization in November. We respectfully ask you, as the members of the commission, to consider dedicating a portion of the revenue collected from the marijuana sales tax to be allocated to fund youth services and prevention programming, specifically for mentoring, as is the practice of the State of Colorado. As a state that is reeling from continued societal challenges, it is imperative that resources are reserved for prevention measures to invest in youth and build resilient communities across the Commonwealth.

In early 2015, the Office of State Planning and Budgeting in Colorado reported that tax collection figures in the first year of legal commercial sales reached a total of \$48 million from recreational marijuana. As shown in the attached document, in FY16-17, 1.15% of the sales tax revenue collected was allocated to the Youth Mentoring Services Fund which is administered through the Colorado Department of Human Services and supports formal mentoring programs in the state, similar to the Mentoring Matching Grants which is the only state funding for mentoring programs in Massachusetts. This line item was established with the passage of the Colorado Youth Mentoring Services Act. For FY17-18, Governor Hickenlooper proposed 2.29% of the revenue be dedicated to prevention programming specific to the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Reengagement.

Mentoring agencies and youth development organizations across our state are improving the lives of vulnerable youth by providing access to empowering youth-adult relationships and the kind of wrap-around supports youth need to stay in school, make responsible choices around risk-taking behavior, and to succeed in all facets of their lives. Research has proven that at-risk youth who are matched with a mentor for more than a year are less likely to become involved in substance and alcohol abuse, less likely to be truant, less likely to commit violent acts, and are more likely to show improved academic performance and improved attitudes toward school.

Mass Mentoring Partnership fights to maintain the funding that enables mentoring programs to succeed, build capacity, and serve more youth. As a result of revenue shortfalls and an unstable national economy over the years, the Mentoring Matching Grants line item has been cut in half from when it was established in 2000, yet the need for mentoring relationships has grown substantially, particularly in cities and in

low-income communities of color. Mass Mentoring is also working to embed developmental relationships in schools as a means to address dropout prevention and recovery. Currently, there are very few systemic approaches to dropout prevention that has been approved by the legislature, likely stemming from the lack of funding tied to dropout bills in both the Massachusetts House and Senate.

While we know that the fiscal outlook in Massachusetts has been improving, there continues to be challenges to provide the resources necessary to support all of the programs who serve the critical needs of youth across our state. As you are charged with the difficult task regulating the large and complicated marijuana industry, we hope you will strongly consider a portion of this alternative funding stream be dedicated specifically to supporting developmental relationships for our young people.

Mass Mentoring Partnership, and our network of youth development organizations, would like to offer our support and serve a resource to you. We are willing and able to garner wide support and organizing around funding for the mentoring field and prevention programming, as we have for the Mentoring Matching Grants line item and dropout prevention and recovery legislation since 2000. Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this request. Attached you will find a list of appropriations from the revenue obtained from recreational marijuana sales as well as a copy of the Colorado Youth Mentoring Services Act.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marty Martinez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marty Martinez
CEO, Mass Mentoring Partnership