



Press release
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**Visit of Senator Carignan, Boisvenu and Batters to Washington D.C.:
Marijuana questions answered - Canadians have reasons to be worried!**

Ottawa, April 5, 2018 - Conservative Senators Claude Carignan, Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu and Denise Batters recently met with top American leaders and officials on the upcoming legalization of marijuana in Canada. They today reported the outcomes of their meetings with American officials in Washington, D.C. The U.S. administration and the groups met gave clear answers to questions that have been insufficiently answered by the Trudeau government.

Meeting with Department of Homeland Security and United States Customs and Border Protection Field Operations:

On Tuesday, Senators met with senior officials from the Department of Homeland Security and the United States Customs and Border Protection Field Operations Bureau. Several issues were raised.

Marijuana is illegal in the United States and this will not change, even though a few individual states have legalized marijuana. At the U.S. border, an individual admitting having consumed marijuana may be subject to additional inspection or even be denied entry to the U.S. American authorities have no intention to increase their personnel at the border. An increase in standby time is expected for crossing the U.S. border, for both regular and Nexus travelers as well as truckers (Passexpress). Travelers can expect an increase of secondary inspections as trained dogs will still detect residue and smell marijuana odours even if the consumption dates back a few days. Nexus or Passexpress cards can therefore be revoked.

Great concerns were expressed about the smuggling of marijuana at the border. In Colorado, organized crime has created new cartels operating under the appearance of a legitimate industry. U.S. authorities are worried about new contraband activities developing in Canada and crossing the border. In states

that have legalized marijuana, law enforcement is struggling to deal with these new cartels.

Finally, U.S. officials were taken aback to learn that there are no random testing measures in place in Canada for public transport operators (planes, trains, buses, etc.). These random tests have existed in the United States for more than ten years. They also underlined rising crimes and public health issues arising in the U.S. following the legalization of marijuana in Canada.

Meeting with Jeff Sessions, Attorney General of the United States:

Senators met Wednesday with U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Trump administration officials. Concerns were expressed regarding the impact of legalization on young people, the border, military personnel and new organized crime cartels. This meeting highlighted some aspects of Bill C-45 that may have an impact on both countries.

Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM)

Senators met with representatives of SAM. SAM representatives discussed their recent study, which reveals concerning data. For example, Colorado's crime rate has increased 11 times faster since the legalization compared to the rest of the U.S. Calls to poison centers have increased by 210%. Central Oregon hospitals saw an increase of almost 2,000% emergency visits due to marijuana poisoning. Finally, the state of Washington has seen an increase of twice as many deaths on the road related to marijuana-impaired driving. It is urgent that the Canadian ministers responsible for the legalization of marijuana heed this report.

Round table with political advisors from Congress Representatives and Senators

Senators met with several Senate and Congressional advisors from 12 different state. They confirmed an increase in organized crime activities and the creation of new cartels using the cover of legitimate companies to illegally cultivate and traffic marijuana. They urged Canadian authorities to draw on the American experience to avoid the pitfalls that resulted from legalization.

Senator Carignan, Boisvenu and Batters return from this trip with many more answers than they had previously received from the Trudeau government. They

will share their observations with their Senate colleagues – and Canadians - during the study of Bill C-45.

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