



## NEWS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release:* Friday, Oct. 30, 2020

*Media Contact:* Jeff Harris, (317) 847-4781, [media@weinzapfelforAG.com](mailto:media@weinzapfelforAG.com)

# WEINZAPFEL, MEARS DISCUSS PUBLIC SAFETY BENEFITS OF MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. – Legalizing and regulating marijuana in Indiana would not only generate millions for schools and public safety it will make communities safer, says Democratic Attorney General nominee Jonathan Weinzapfel and Marion County Prosecutor Ryan Mears.

Earlier this week Weinzapfel, a former Mayor of Evansville and the only candidate for Attorney General to run a police force, [released a 9-point plan](#) to legalize marijuana for adults and dedicate the estimated \$171 million in new taxes to fund improvements to the state's public education and criminal justice systems.

"As a former Mayor, I know firsthand that the resources of local communities, no matter the size, are stretched paper thin," said Weinzapfel. "The criminalization of possession and use of marijuana just takes away valuable time and resources from law enforcement agencies that could be better spent on solving more serious crimes. It just doesn't make sense."

As prosecutor for the state's largest county, last year Mears announced his office would no longer prosecute those arrested for possession of small amounts of marijuana.

"Here in Indianapolis, ending these prosecutions was a data-driven decision to increase fairness and equity in our criminal justice system," said Mears. "It has freed our law enforcement agencies to delegate their resources to violent crime. It is time for the legislature to stop moving the goalpost on this issue. I am glad that Jonathan will be there to lead this discussion as our next Attorney General."

Indiana is one of just 23 states where possession of even small amounts of marijuana could lead to jail time and it's one of 17 states where its medicinal use is illegal. Indiana's neighbors, Illinois and Michigan, have already legalized recreational usage and Ohio now permits medical marijuana.

At the same time, the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute estimates that 77 percent of Indiana jails are overcrowded or at capacity, while other public reporting indicates that 45 percent of drug arrests are marijuana related.

"This is a fundamental difference between me and my opponent. Todd Rokita wants to lock people up for marijuana, even those that are using it for medical reasons. I think that is nonsense," said Weinzapfel. "I think we can use this as an opportunity to lessen the burden on law enforcement while creating a common sense approach that will generate millions each year to help build Indiana back stronger than ever following this pandemic."

For more information on Jonathan or his campaign for Indiana Attorney General, please visit [www.WeinzapfelforAG.com](http://www.WeinzapfelforAG.com). To schedule an interview, email [media@weinzapfelforAG.com](mailto:media@weinzapfelforAG.com).

###