



NEWS RELEASE

Republican Liberty Caucus of Colorado

Contact: Earl Bandy, Chairman chairman@rlccolorado.com

Defend Liberty from the Colorado Amendment 64 Joint Committee

Expansive tax and regulatory powers sought, says GOP group

MARCH 22, 2013 – DENVER, CO. The 165 page report released last week by the Governor's Amendment 64 Task Force contains the words “tax”, “taxes”, “taxing”, “taxpaying”, “taxation” and “taxed” a total of 122 times. The word “freedom” appears once – in Appendix A, the full copy of the text of Amendment 64 – where the concept of “individual freedom” is included in the first sentence of the purpose of the Amendment. Sadly, the word “liberty” merits zero mentions in the Task Force's final report.

“It is a dangerous time for liberty when the legislature is in session,” remarked Earl Bandy, Chairman of the Republican Liberty Caucus of Colorado. “However, there are several Republicans asking important questions on the Joint Committee, including Senator Vicki Marble and Representative Brian DelGrosso, and members of the Republican Liberty Caucus of Colorado support their efforts to implement Amendment 64 in a Republican way.”

Last week, during public testimony, Sen. Marble clarified that the 15% excise tax as recommended by the Task Force report is not fixed at that amount by Amendment 64. That 15% is actually the maximum upper limit allowed by the Amendment for at least four (4) years. The Legislature could very well set the excise tax much lower. Members of the Republican Liberty Caucus of Colorado support a 0% excise tax (and no new sales tax increases) as the best path to growth in jobs and the economy, while respecting TABOR.

Yesterday, the *Denver Post* reported that Rep. DelGrosso brought up concerns over the rent-seeking displayed by the medical marijuana industry as it seeks to gain “monopoly” control of the new adult-use industry for the first year of implementation. The one-year plan goes hand-in-hand with the vertical integration model as proposed by the Task Force report. This model, also referred to as common ownership and copied from the current medical marijuana regulations, would effectively require every retail marijuana establishment to operate like a brew pub – selling what they can manufacture themselves, with perhaps up to 30% of inventory allowed from outside sources.

Members of the Republican Liberty Caucus of Colorado support diversity in the marketplace without government picking winners and losers. Just as bars and restaurants that import 100% of their alcohol can peacefully co-exist alongside brew pubs that make 100% of their own craft brews, so should a variety of retail marijuana establishments be allowed to bloom in this new free market space. While sympathetic to the plight of medical marijuana centers in regards to overbearing government regulations, complicated tax structures, and the occasional federal decree from afar, the solution to the problem of too much government is... more liberty and less government.

To further that principle of limited government, Republican Legislators should welcome the opportunity to repeal decades of failed marijuana prohibition statutes under cover of Amendment 64 – reaching above and beyond the text where called for. Also, the support of amnesty for current non-violent marijuana prisoners would do great justice for the cause of individual freedom.

The Republican Liberty Caucus of Colorado was Chartered in 2011 and is a 527 political organization, nationally recognized as the “Conscience of the Republican Party.” Please join us! RLCCOLORADO.COM