



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
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For Immediate Release

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Legislators from Fall River and Springfield File Bill Focusing on Treatment Facilities and Marijuana Establishment Siting

Oct. 28 2019- State Representatives Carole Fiola of Fall River and Carlos Gonzalez of Springfield have filed bill HD. 4551, An Act relative to the location of marijuana establishments. The bill would restrict the siting of any marijuana establishments to being inside of a 500 foot radius of sober homes along with inpatient and outpatient treatment centers.

Under current Massachusetts law, the zoning of marijuana establishments must be outside a 500 foot radius of pre-existing public or private schools with children in grades K-12. This legislation is being filed to expand that restriction to include sober homes and certain treatment centers. This legislation keeps the provision that municipalities have the right to adopt ordinances to reduce the distance requirement.

This bill comes in response to the fight against the opioid epidemic.

Representative Fiola stated "Throughout Fall River we do so much to aid our neighbors who struggle with addiction including hosting several sober homes, treatment centers, and support groups. We need to do all we can to ensure that this population, who has already reached out for help, stays in recovery. I think it is common sense to keep these facilities separated so that those who use marijuana products recreationally or medically have access, while those who are trying to avoid these products are not facing that temptation every time they leave treatment".

Representative Carlos Gonzalez has cosponsored this legislation and stated "Our legislative efforts to support those battling through substance abuse must ensure that their recovery process is not hindered but rather enhanced as they are on the road to recovery. Establishing boundaries on recreational marijuana facilities and 500 feet away from sober homes and treatment centers in our communities will support to curtail the recidivism of substance abuse and addiction. It also provides municipalities input, consideration and an approval process that best addresses local challenges."

Representatives Fiola and Gonzalez are working to ensure that the marijuana facilities being established across the Commonwealth are accessible, but with a sensitivity to the fact that many in the Commonwealth are still facing their own recovery.

Please see the attached bill.