

Legal pot in Cook County? Lawmaker says let's vote



Photo by Getty Images

With one eye on government's bottom line and another on public opinion, a Cook County commissioner today announced plans to let county residents vote in the March 20 primary on legalizing the recreational use of marijuana.

Barely after the proposed advisory referendum was announced, Commissioner John Fritchey said he already has enough support from colleagues to assure the measure makes it to the ballot.

Fritchey said he's acting because taxpayers spend a small fortune to prosecute low-level possession charges and because those arrested end up with an ill-deserved record that hurts their ability to work and live their lives.

"It's clear that the biggest impact of our current laws is to waste millions of dollars while unnecessarily burdening both the Cook County State's Attorney's office and the Office of Public Defender," Fritchey said. "It is also taking police officers off the streets instead of having them dealing with more serious crimes. Let's stop wasting precious resources on misdemeanor marijuana possession charges so we can focus on more pressing issues, like gun violence and the opioid epidemic."