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Clerk of Parliament  
Rickett Street  
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## Submission - The Joint Select Committee

"Cannabis/ marijuana has deep historical, cultural and religious significance to Caribbean people. It can be traced to several ethnic, religious and cultural traditions within Asia, Africa and the Middle East and from ancient times was known throughout history as a substance with healing properties. It was introduced during the post-emancipation period to the Caribbean countries of Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago by East Indian indentured labourers. The designation of cannabis/ marijuana as an unlawful substance and a dangerous drug is of relatively recent vintage. For most of our history, cannabis/ marijuana was a free substance, grown naturally and easily throughout the region. Indeed, many CARICOM citizens have memories of their grandparents and forefathers using cannabis/ marijuana in benign fashion, such as "bash tea", before the advent of prohibition, or, at least, its strict enforcement." CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana.

The African Heritage Foundation is of the opinion that:

1. a) Cannabis being a medicinal plant used by our grandparents and forefathers, should be included in the Medical Cannabis Bill 2019, under Traditional Medicinal Cannabis.  
b) Persons desirous of cultivating cannabis for their personal medicinal use should be allowed to grow 7 plants within the confines of their homes.  
c) Licenses can be developed and issued to persons desirous of home cultivation for personal medicinal use. These licenses should cost no more than one hundred and fifty dollars (\$150.00) and renewable annually.  
d) Cannabis inspectors can be employed to monitor quantity of growth by license holders.  
e) Traditional Cannabis Cultivation (TCC) licenses should allow its owner to have on their person one ounce of cannabis for transportation purposes throughout the island.  
f) Penalties for persons caught contravening TCC licenses should not face incarceration, but made to pay a fine of One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) per cannabis plant in excess of regulations.
2. Persons that have been convicted of an indictable offence and have served their sentences, should not be punished twice for their offence by exclusion from the cannabis industry.
3. The first cannabis farm and processing plant should be state owned, and should share joint ownership between the government and the private sector. Revenue from these entities should be used to further develop Barbados health care.



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4. To avoid exploitation of Barbadian employees in the cannabis industry, government should develop a minimum wage for their economic safety.
5. Banking facilities must be created to facilitate revenue from the cannabis industry
6. Government should work with relevant invested stakeholders on a national cannabis educational initiative.

The AHF in response to concerns raised by committee members on the social impact of cannabis regulated for traditional medicinal home use, offer these points:

1. As it relates to impaired driving – “In the largest and most precisely controlled study of its kind carried out by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) to research the risks of cannabis and driving, it was found that other "studies that measure the presence of THC in the drivers' blood or oral fluid, rather than relying on self-report tend to have much lower (or no) elevated crash risk estimates. Likewise better controlled studies have found lower (or no) elevated crash risk estimates. The study found that after adjusting for age, gender, race and alcohol use, drivers who tested positive for marijuana were no more likely to crash than those who had not used any drugs or alcohol prior to driving. The study however cautions that these results do not indicate that drug use by drivers is risk-free. In *Cannabis and driving: a review of the literature and commentary*, the United Kingdom's [Department for Transport](#) reviewed data on cannabis and driving, finding "Cannabis impairs driving behaviour. However, this impairment is mediated in that subjects under cannabis treatment appear to perceive that they are indeed impaired. Where they can compensate, they do, for example ... effects of driving behaviour are present up to an hour after smoking but do not continue for extended periods" Wikipedia
2. Research has found a positive association between marijuana use and high school dropout status, but it also shows that over half of the association can be explained by prior differences in observational characteristics and behaviors (i.e., selection bias). The remaining association becomes statistically insignificant after measures of cigarette smoking are included in the analysis, a variable that is not systematically included in economic analyses. Because we are aware of no physiological justification for why controlling for cigarette smoking should account for marijuana’s cognitive effects on learning, we interpret this as indicating that the negative relationship between marijuana use and high school completion is unlikely to be due to adverse effects on cognition and more likely to be the result of omitted variable bias or the effects of peer associations or other factors. The argument on cannabis causing more school dropouts is debatable as research shows:
  - a) Problem behavior theory postulates that individuals with a predisposition toward nonconformity and deviance are more likely to engage in multiple unconventional behaviors that reciprocally influence one another (Jessor and Jessor, 1977; Donovan and Jessor, 1985). Social attachment theory argues that it is weak bonds with family, school, religion, or other conventional institutions that lead to general problem behaviors (Hawkins and Weis, 1985; Simmons and Blyth, 1987; Sommer, 1985). Social learning theory (Bandura,



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- 1977; 1985) stresses the influence of exposure to deviant peers or family members who act as role models for specific actions through their approval of them.
- b) The basic sciences provide the main rationale for believing that marijuana use causes low educational attainment. Neuroscientists have shown that marijuana use interrupts normal cognitive functioning and memory by activating cannabinoid receptor sites in the part of the brain that controls memory (Matsuda *et al.*, 1993; Heyser *et al.*, 1993). What remains debated is whether the detrimental effect on memory and cognitive functioning is short-lived, sustained for a period of time past intoxication, or cumulative in terms of its total detrimental effect on cognitive functioning. The Rastafari community provides evidence that the detrimental effect on memory theory must be questioned. The vast number of reggae artists of whom 90% use cannabis are required to possess great memory retention in their trade. Rastafari brothers and sisters are engaged in various forms of employment that require good memory retention. Cannabis use can open an individual up in a manner that allows them to be more creative in the thought process. Schools that are founded on conformity become very uninteresting to these individuals.
3. As it relates to cannabis being poisonous for the body – “Labeling marijuana or marijuana-infused products as “poison” has been controversial. This often results from the misconception that for something to be a “poison” it has to cause serious health consequences or death. It is not likely that someone who uses marijuana will have severe health consequences, but exposure to a substance is considered a “poisoning” once abnormal or unwanted side effects occur.
- Cannabis affects each individual differently and, no matter how it is used, can cause unwanted side effects. Moreover, these negative reactions can be more pronounced when marijuana is used in ways and amounts that were not originally intended. The most frequently reported unintended side effects include drowsiness, rapid heart rate, and irritability. So are you likely to die from using? No. But, are there potentially negative health risks involved? Yes.
- Greater Risks with Synthetic Marijuana**
4. It is also important to know that synthetic marijuana products, known by names such as Spice or K2, do not have the same effects as natural cannabis. These artificially created drugs *have* been known to cause severe health effects. They are not marijuana!” - Whitney Pennington, Education and Communications Specialist Washington Poison Center

The African Heritage Foundation is in favour of the proposed Medical Cannabis Bill 2019 provided it infuses traditional indigenous use of the plant as prescribed above.

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Respectfully  
Paul Rock (Simba)  
President  
African Heritage Foundation.