



Pennsylvania Department of the

**AUDITOR GENERAL**

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## News for Immediate Release

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### **Auditor General DePasquale Supports Bethlehem City Council's Vote to Decriminalize Small Amounts of Marijuana**

**HARRISBURG** – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today issued the following statement on Bethlehem City Council's vote to reduce penalties for possession of small amounts of marijuana:

“Bethlehem City Council's initial vote to decriminalize small amounts of marijuana is responsible, reasonable and just. It is time for Pennsylvania to stop treating the possession of a small amount of marijuana as a criminal offense. If the law is approved later this month, Bethlehem would become the eighth municipality in Pennsylvania to realize that decriminalizing marijuana makes sense.

“Decriminalization saves millions of dollars spent yearly on marijuana prosecutions. Decriminalization also has human benefits by reducing the loss of income and other social, personal and emotional impacts on those arrested for simply possessing a small amount of marijuana.

“Bethlehem is doing the right thing. I urge other municipalities – and ultimately the entire commonwealth – to do the same and end the antiquated ‘Reefer Madness’ political ideology on marijuana.”

Bethlehem City Council voted unanimously Tuesday on the first reading of a new law which proposes to reduce the penalty for possession of 30 grams or less of cannabis.

If the law is adopted on its second reading in two weeks, Bethlehem would become the eighth municipality in Pennsylvania to decriminalize marijuana, joining Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Erie, Harrisburg, York, State College and Allentown.

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