Session Description: There is a longstanding conflict between the federal Controlled Substances Act and state laws legalizing marijuana. This year, with the release of the attorney general's Memorandum on Marijuana Enforcement, states that have legalized marijuana in any context—whether decriminalizing small amounts or legalizing medical, recreational or both—face uncertainty over how the federal government will pursue enforcement. Learn how this new policy may affect states and how to proceed.

Moderator: Representative Eric Hutchings, Utah

Biographies

Assemblymember Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr.
California
State Capitol
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Serving as the voice of the people of California’s 59th District in the State Assembly, Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr. was elected to the State Legislature in November 2012 and re-elected in 2016. The district he represents encompasses a wide-range of diverse, culturally rich and dynamic communities. It lies entirely within Los Angeles County and includes the neighborhoods of South Los Angeles, Florence-Firestone, Walnut Park, and a portion of Huntington Park.

In the Legislature, Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer is chair of the Public Safety Committee and serves on the following standing committees: Agriculture Committee, Appropriations Committee, Budget Committee, Government Organization Committee, Labor Committee and Budget Subcommittee 5 on Public Safety. He is chair of the Select Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color.

Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer played a leading role in the development and historic passage of the state’s first regulatory framework for medical cannabis. He has established himself as a pioneer and continues his work by shaping adult use cannabis policy since the passage of Proposition 64.

Senator Roger J. Katz
Maine
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Senator Roger Katz is currently serving his fourth term in the Maine Senate. He represents the people of Senate District 15, which consists of Augusta, China, Oakland, Sidney and Vassalboro. Prior to his legislative service, Senator Katz was Mayor of Augusta for two terms.

In the 125th Legislature, Senator Katz was the chair of the Government Oversight Committee and a member of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. During the 126th Legislature, Senator Katz continued as a member of the Government Oversight Committee and served as the assistant Republican leader in the Maine Senate. In the 127th Legislature, he is once again the Chair of the Government Oversight Committee and a member of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee.

This session, in addition to chairing the Government Oversight Committee and serving as a member of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, Senator Katz will also serve as a member of the Health and Human Services Committee.

Senator Katz has long been active in his community, serving as Chair of United Way and Co-Chair of Team Cony, which helped raise $1.5 million for Augusta’s
new high school. He has also served as president of the Kennebec Valley YMCA, chair of the Augusta Charter Commission, co-chair of the Augusta Bicentennial Celebration, chair of the Augusta Development Corporation and vice president of the Maine State Music Theatre.

For his dedication to the community, Senator Katz has been honored by both Le Club Calumet and the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce.

An accomplished attorney, Senator Katz is a former president of the Maine Trial Lawyers Association and has been named as one of the “Outstanding Lawyers in America.” He also co-hosted “Looking at the Law,” a statewide television program.

Roger Katz resides in Augusta and is the proud father of two adult children, Shari and Jonathan.

Robert Mikos  
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Professor Robert Mikos is one of the nation’s leading authorities on marijuana law and policy. He has written, testified, consulted and lectured on the struggles among federal, state, and local officials to control marijuana policy. He has also published a pioneering textbook, Marijuana Law, Policy, and Authority (Wolters Kluwer 2017), and a companion website that analyzes breaking developments in the field. He earned his A.B. cum laude from Princeton University and his J.D. summa cum laude from the University of Michigan. After graduation, Mikos clerked for Chief Judge Michael Boudin of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. He now teaches constitutional law, federalism, and marijuana law and policy at Vanderbilt University. He has also taught at the University of Michigan, the University of Notre Dame, and the University of California, Davis.