

Board Members,

It is with great disappointment that I write to you today to inform you that I have submitted my letter of resignation to the Governor.

I have been reluctant to write this email due to the deep connection and commitment I have to this work and to this Team. And while I planned to serve out the remainder of my term, I no longer have confidence in my ability to do my job and lead this team effectively under current circumstances.

It would be disingenuous for me to not acknowledge how difficult the last several months have been. Still, the realization of what we have been building together has been motivation enough for me to stay focused on the mission.

Nearly 10 years ago now, I decided to take on this mission. To find a way to end the lunacy of cannabis prohibition and the devastating impact of racially motivated enforcement practices. At the time, the state reigned as the marijuana arrest capital of the world. But more than that, policies that started here, established harmful precedents. Such as the use of the odor of cannabis alone to establish probable cause and to justify negative police interactions and police killings.

We've come a long way since those days.

In many ways, the legalization of cannabis, the bringing to an end of a crusade of incarceration, denial of access to housing, education and employment opportunities. An end to the deportations of countless fathers and the separation of countless mothers from their children because of a positive test WAS the job.

But by 2016, when I submitted my first redraft of the bill to our Sponsors and Champions Liz Krueger and Crystal Peoples-Stokes, my eyes had already been opened to what the legalization of cannabis in New York really represented.

Justice. It was about justice.

It has been the honor of a lifetime to lead this group of the most dedicated public servants that I have ever encountered. And I am eternally grateful to each of you who have lent your expertise to this work.

Make no mistake, the smartest people in cannabis are here on this Team and in this Office and they have been working tirelessly to launch new businesses, protect workers, and ensure products are safe for consumers and patients. They are doing the difficult work of market building while still educating the masses. There's not enough of them. But that has never stopped us from doing what needed to be done and fighting the fights that needed to be fought.

They are fearless and unapologetic about doing the right thing. My only ask is that you stand with them as they continue to forge ahead.

There is so much left to do. But I have the utmost confidence in this Team and in you all to stay focused on the mission and to keep driving this work forward.

With gratitude,

-Chris