

In Defense of Equity: Cannabis Regulators of Color Speak Out on New York's Cannabis Leadership Shake-Up (Op-Ed)

The Cannabis Regulators of Color Coalition (CRCC) reacts to Governor Kathy Hochul's recent announcement regarding the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM).

Questionable Report Findings

CRCC expresses concern over the biased and unsupported conclusions of the New York State Office of General Services (OGS) report, which influenced the decision not to reinstate OCM Executive Director Chris Alexander.

Lack of Evidence

The coalition highlights the lack of evidence provided in the OGS report to support claims of leadership incompetence within OCM and challenges the selective focus on licensing challenges while ignoring broader agency activities.

Deflecting Accountability

CRCC criticizes the OGS report for deflecting accountability from the governor and OGS itself, placing undue blame on OCM leadership for systemic challenges faced during the agency's startup phase.

Root Causes of Challenges

The coalition urges a focus on addressing the root causes of OCM's challenges, including delays in appointing leadership, litigation impacting licensing progress, and inadequate support from state agencies.

Prioritizing Equity

CRCC emphasizes the importance of prioritizing equity initiatives, such as the Social Equity Fund, and calls out delays and failures to support justice-involved licensees in the cannabis industry.

Unfair Comparison

The coalition argues against the selective scrutiny of OCM's performance, advocating for a fair and comprehensive assessment that considers the challenges inherent in establishing new regulatory frameworks.

Call to Action

CRCC calls on Governor Hochul to ensure fair evaluations of OCM's performance and reconsider the decision to remove Executive Director Chris Alexander, emphasizing the potential negative impact on critical areas of regulatory implementation.

Author Background

Shekia Scott and Cat Packer, both board members of CRCC, lend their expertise and experience in cannabis regulation to provide insight into the challenges facing OCM and advocate for equitable and evidence-based decision-making.

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