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Dear Legislators:

I am writing in opposition to SB 1014 regarding marijuana decriminalization and SB 1015 regarding medical excuse marijuana

It is most important to understand that legislative actions giving access to marijuana seriously jeopardize consumer protection. Our processes for bringing medicine to the public have been established so that science, not emotion, prevails. Medicine needs come through the FDA to assure safety and efficacy. The FDA opposes medical excuse marijuana and such legislative actions. More importantly, the recent legislative initiatives create medicine by popular vote. Marijuana is not a safe drug, and is far from clearly effective. The active ingredients of marijuana are already available to the public by medical prescription. There is no advantage, and indeed there is a disadvantage, to smoking marijuana over available medications.

Marijuana advocates allege benefits of marijuana use with little or no clear scientific basis. Neither Marijuana nor pure THC has ever been compared to new anti-nausea medications which are extremely effective. Cannabis can actually enhance pain because of a very narrow therapeutic window. The progression of glaucoma is not slowed, and ophthalmologists do not consider it a reasonable treatment. Cannabinoids may reduce muscle spasm, but they damage gait in Multiple Sclerosis patients. While cannabinoids stimulate appetite, it appears to increase body fat rather than lean body mass. There exists no credible evidence that marijuana is beneficial for depression, drug abuse, headaches, or menstrual cramps.

Allowing such legislation to become law is riding a wave of emotion and mob psychology that has been carefully crafted, financed, and driven by the marijuana lobby. They have declared that medical excuse marijuana is the battlefield to gain the overall legalization of pot. The advocates' strategy remains the same; play to emotion, overstate the benefits of marijuana, use the medical excuse to get the camel's nose under the tent and then push for more legal access to pot.

Some of the most consistently identified problems with marijuana are the effect on memory, concentration, coordination, and the development of psychosis. The effects on driving skills and coordination are extremely serious, and marijuana is regularly implicated in trauma. Since allowing marijuana dispensaries, California has experienced significant increases in marijuana-related trauma, and marijuana addiction cases far greater than the national average. Marijuana also has effects on the lungs, and has been found to damage lung immunity and function. Marijuana has serious effects on the fetus which have been documented not only at birth, but have also been seen in the children who used during pregnancy.

Supporting medical excuse marijuana either reflects serious ignorance of the medical literature or malignant misrepresentation of it. Medicine and policy makers must stop this circus of medicine by popular vote which is dangerous and which plays in to the pot legalization lobby.

For a detailed scientific discussion of the medical excuse issue see www.globaldrugpolicy.org

Sincerely,

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