
May 18, 2010

Board of Pharmacy;

Please accept these comments as my testimony concerning the rescheduling of methamphetamine and cannabis in Oregon. I regret not being able to present this in person. Thank you for the opportunity to still participate in this process.

My name is James Bowman. I have lived in rural Southern Oregon for twenty-seven years. I have seen the devastation and destruction that meth has had in other people's lives. I support rescheduling meth as a schedule I controlled substance. I also support you in your decision to reschedule cannabis and encourage you to schedule at the lowest classification of V. I have been using cannabis for thirty-four years and watching others use it for decades now. I have found cannabis to be a safe and effective non-addictive herbal supplement that has a number of beneficial therapeutic effects with very little or no adverse side effects.

I am very grateful to live in a state that has lead the way for reasonable government policy toward cannabis. Oregon, along with California, was among the first states to decriminalize small amounts of cannabis and allow for implementation of medical cannabis programs. Oregon is the first state to allow hemp to be farmed, and now to reschedule cannabis.

Oregon now has the chance to lead again and you, the Board of Pharmacy, will decide the next step. Our elected representatives appointed you seven people to be the defacto representatives of all Oregonians. The decision you make will affect over one million Oregonians directly.

I was ten years old when the United States Congress passed the Controlled Substance Act in 1970 temporarily classifying cannabis as a schedule I substance. Congress, to their credit, acknowledged that they knew too little about marijuana to permanently control it as a Schedule I and created a presidential commission to review the research and make recommendations for a long-term strategy. This commission, the Schafer Commission, officially known as the National Commission on

Marijuana and Drug Abuse, took it's job seriously. Their work is still, after forty years, the most comprehensive review of cannabis ever conducted by the Federal Government and the least politically biased. In the end, the Commission found an extensive degree of misinformation and tried to de-mythologize and de-symbolize cannabis. The report found that cannabis use did not cause crime or aggression, lead to harder drug use, or create significant biochemical, mental or physical abnormalities.

Nixon ignored his own commission's advise to not criminalize cannabis and used his influence to make it permanently a Schedule I controlled substance. This felonizing of cannabis has left twenty million cannabis users in the United States as convicted felons. The burden placed on their lives and the lives of their loved ones has been unfair and unnecessary. This felonization has lead to legal oppression against a vibrant creative subculture living peaceful lifestyles. Felonization has had an even more ominous effect on our law enforcement agencies and the prison industrial complex. Unprecedented construction of jails and prisons has lead to a demographic who's livelihood is based on lies and misinformation at the expense of the tax payer.

The legacy of Nixon's war on drugs has to end. It can only end when good people realize that this policy has been a mistake. You seven Oregonians can carry on the Oregon tradition and blaze the trail for other states to again follow. By voting to reschedule cannabis as a schedule V controlled substance you are sending a message. Nixon was wrong! Cannabis and the cannabis community are not a threat to those three million Oregonians who don't utilize the resource or love someone who does.

The members of Oregon's cannabis community ask you, the Board of Pharmacy, to go one step further and as a unified group advise and recommend the Director of the Department of Human Services and the Attorney General of Oregon to remove cannabis from the controlled substance list altogether. Given all the new information about the potential health benefits of the cannabis plant that is currently available this should not be an unreasonable request. If cannabis was a new found plant and was subjected to the criteria for being placed on the controlled substance list it would not be included.

- The first criteria to be considered for this list is that the substance has high abuse potential .
- The second criteria is that the substance has little or no medicinal use.
- The third is that there is the possibility of harm to humans.

A rational non-biased review of the research of cannabis would show that it does not belong on the list. Because cannabis is less harmful to individuals and to society than alcoholic beverages, caffeine, and tobacco it should be regulated with similar guidelines.

By taking cannabis off the controlled substance list, we Oregonians flex our state sovereignty and our willingness to admit past mistakes and work together to repair the damages caused from the forty year civil war on cannabis. It would also allow Oregon to take the lead in a legal domestic cannabis economy. A legitimate, state sanctioned cannabis economy would double Oregon's total agricultural sales from approximately four to eight billion per year. In Southern Oregon a legal cannabis economy would easily create thousands of new jobs in the first year alone. These jobs would be taxable, living wage jobs provided to reduce Oregon's unemployment woes especially in the Rogue Valley where joblessness is higher than the state average.

No economist will argue that currently cannabis is Oregon's number one cash crop. Oregon already has a strong cannabis culture and a worldwide reputation for fine quality cannabis. The underground cannabis community has flourished since 1970 when the felonization of cannabis began in the United States. Oregon's challenge for the future will be to find a way to convert the underground economy into an above ground, tax-paying community.

On pages twenty and twenty-one of the law enforcement's powerpoint submission you see a picture and description of our farm in which law enforcement is using as an example of abuse of the OMMP. As the manager of our COOP, I would like to extend an invitation to the Board and staff to tour our cooperative cannabis farm and to meet our workers and patients. We think it only fair to be able to present ourselves to you and explain how we operate. By viewing our farm from the aerial photos you are seeing only law enforcement's point of view. We object to their portrayal of our farm in their presentation to your board. We are proud of what we do. I hope the board will seriously consider this invitation to build bridges of understanding so that you can make a more informed decision on this important issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and your careful consideration on this important topic.

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