Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and constitutional Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

My Name is Joseph Sepe I am an Accountant and practising Tax Agent. I am forwarding a submission to add my voice to the growing acceptance and push for Marijuana Decriminalisation. My interest in medical Marijuana is due to a dear friend of mine having brain cancer, his doctors have only given 6 months. The illegality of Marijuana stops many people from accessing this product they don't want to break the law. Further concern is that people are accessing the product from unscrupulous people who prey on people with limited knowledge.

I have researched this extensively. I am aware that there are pensioners trying to access the product and are being ripped off. All the research, studies and trials overseas indicate that medical Marijuana will be beneficial for many ailments. Please do not be swayed by the pharmaceutical companies who only want it for pain relief. Please note there have been approximately 88 trials conducted overseas with 79 being positive and 9 not as positive, please further note most of the legal drugs have had trials more unfavourable than this.

Further concern of mine is that the pharmaceutical companies will try to sway the trials into only being for pain relief. Please note the studies overseas have concluded that the medicine from marijuana is beneficial for all ailments from curing cancer to relieving arthritis etc. Recent studies have concluded the Marijuana is the most medicinal plant ever.

Please take the time to do your own research and not accept what the pharmaceutical companies are telling you. The public deserve the best health care available even of it is making it themselves.

I accept that the pharmaceutical companies would be the main lobby group with which the medical profession is involved with, but take notice of the people and public who the government represent.

Please take note of the last MSN poll that had 85% of the respondent in favour of medical Marijuana. And a further Poll had up to 92% were in favour of full decriminization. Further concern of mine is if the pharmaceuticals companies are involved they will not want this to be successful all you need to verify is how much they make in sales from pain Killers. There is a wide range of pain Killers from non- prescription drugs to High Opiate drugs such as Oxynorm or OxyContin both hard opiate drugs. What's the difference between making medicine from Marijuana or opiated based product as our Prime Minister stated.

A further point to the decimalisation of Marijuana is that I and a majority of the public believe that the decriminalization of Marijuana will reduce the drug problem in Australia. Presently Ice is the drug of choice by users and dealers. This is an insidious drug that destroys all who touch it and sometimes innocent people; most of the violence in our society is due to ICE. There have numerous articles about the reduction in crime in the US and Europe after decriminalisation, look at he Portugal, Uruaguay and USA statistics on this

I am 55 Years of age and believe one of the reasons Australia wasn't as violent when I was young was because Marijuana was the drug of choice. I haven't come across anyone who was on

Marijuana that would King Hit anyone or cause trouble, ICE on the other hand makes people violent and aggressive.

There needs to be a complete change in attitude towards Marijuana, not only for health reasons but for the economy. Australia is in a position with land availability and weather to be leaders and use the product for new industries, from paper manufacturing to fuel, less need to ruin the environment. Recently I have come across articles re the beneficial effect marijuana has on soil degradation and billion dollar industries that can come from cannabis

There needs to be a regular supply for the users for their needs, People are entitled to look after their own health and be allowed to a natural product. People with different ailments require different strains and quantities to be effective you can.t give the same tablet for everything this defeats the purpose and the effects. The herb and medicine has been used for thousand of years there is even evidence that Jesus Christ was a proponent of cannabis oil.

I believe I have the right to make my own Medicine
I have the right to take my own Medicine
I have the right to be my own physician
I have the right to manage my health
I own my body and I decide

I hope this email gets your attention as I am very passionate now on the subject and willing to help in any way. People want to take control of their own health please dot treat us as children we have a voice and its getting louder. When it comes to health the public will not stay ignorant. Ignorance is the only thing stopping Marijuana from being legal.

Yours Sincerely
Joseph Sepe
Please find below a few articles which support this submission there are many articles, studies and trial outcomes on the subject
Joseph Sepe

GREENS MP and agricultural spokesperson Jeremy Buckingham visited a Goolmangar rice farm yesterday to reveal his party's intention to initiate a parliamentary inquiry into hemp food, which would investigate government roadblocks that restrict NSW hemp farmers from the \$1 billion international hemp food market.

"Since Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) have indicated it (hemp seed) is safe, we want to launch a parliamentary inquiry to change the legislation and regulation in an effort to get hemp food and fibre production up and running, into the marketplace, into retail outlets and into the diets of all Australians," he said.

Mr Buckingham said the inquiry might investigate the police agency assertion that hemp seed interferes with highly sensitive roadside saliva swab drug tests.

Hemp Food CEO and inventor of an export-only hemp seed food bar Paul Benhaim said FSANZ had provided the COAG Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation "the facts" on hemp seed whereas police had only provided what "they believe".

"Unfortunately, FSANZ can't speak on police business."

According to the 2012 FSANZ report, hemp has no psychoactive properties and no adverse health effects.

Advocates for the product say the legalisation of hemp for human consumption in Australia would pave the way for a multi-billion dollar industry on the North Coast.

Goolmangar pecan and rice farmer Frank Boyle said the policy would also help farmers diversify their crops and spread the risk.

"I think that hemp is very suited to this area and it's a very diverse crop as well because it's so multi-use."



New Ruling Finds Cannabis To Be The Most Medicinal Plant In The World

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BY HEMPFORFUTURE ON MARCH 31, 2014NEWS



More than a dozen U.S. states have now completely decriminalized the act of possessing marijuana and both Colorado and Washington have made it legal to possess, sell, transport and cultivate the plant. But soon it may be legalized across the entire country following a decision Thursday by the federal government.

In a historic and significant moment in American history, last November, Colorado became the first US state to legalize marijuana for recreational use. The impact of the decision could soon ripple across the entire country with vast opportunities to educate millions on the top health benefits of marijuana.

With the passage of I-502 in the 2012 Washington State election, marijuana also became legal in Washington–not just for medical use, but also for recreational use–and Alaska, California, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, and Vermont have all decriminalized marijuana.

Consumption and sale of marijuana is still illegal in all other states, though some cities and towns have passed local laws decriminalizing it or making it a low priority for law enforcement officers.

There are also movements in many states to legalize pot, including legalization bills introduced in many other states.

For other states to mimic the systems in Colorado and Washington, they will first have to get legalization laws on their ballots or in their state houses, which could post a challenge, he said.

After Washington state and Colorado passed laws in November 2012 legalizing the consumption and sale of marijuana for adults over 18, lawmakers in both states waited to see whether the federal government would continue to prosecute pot crimes under federal statutes in their states.

Both Colorado and Washington have been working to set up regulatory systems in order to license and tax marijuana growers and retail sellers, but have been wary of whether federal prosecutors would come after them for doing so. They are the first states to legalize pot, and therefore to go through the process of trying to set up a regulatory system.

Ruling Signals The End is Near For Marijuana Prohibition

Last Thursday, the Department of Justice announced that it would not prosecute marijuana crimes that were legal under state law, a move that could signal the end of the country's longtime prohibition on pot is nearing. "It certainly appears to be potentially the beginning of the end," said Paul Armantano, deputy director of the pot lobby group NORML.

The memo sent to states Thursday by the DOJ said that as long as states set up comprehensive regulations governing marijuana, there would be no need for the federal government to step in, a decision that will save the Justice Department from having to use its limited resources on prosecuting individuals for growing or smoking marijuana.

"This memo appears to be sending the message to states regarding marijuana prohibition that is a recognition that a majority of the public and in some states majority of lawmakers no longer want to continue down the road of illegal cannabis, and would rather experiment with different regulatory schemes of license and retail sale of cannabis," Armantano said.

In 2011 the federal government decreed that marijuana had no accepted medical use use and should remain classified as a highly dangerous drug like heroin. Accepting and promoting the powerful health benefits of

marijuana would instantly cut huge profits geared towards cancer treatment and the U.S. would have to admit it imprisons the population for no cause. Nearly half of all drug arrests in the United States are for marijuana.

According to MarijuanaNews.com editor Richard Cowan, the answer is because it is a threat to cannabis prohibition "...there really is massive proof that the suppression of medical cannabis represents the greatest failure of the institutions of a free society, medicine, journalism, science, and our fundamental values," Cowan notes.

While Colorado and Washington have not yet set up their regulatory systems, both states will likely sell licenses to farmers who want to grow marijuana as well as to manufacturing plants and retail sellers. The marijuana will also likely be taxed at each stage of its growth, processing, and sale.

"In both Colorado and Washington, legalization was done by citizens with no participation by elected representatives until they had to pass laws to comply with the initiative. In other initiative states I would expect such measures – I would expect a new one in California, for instance – and roughly half the states permit this and the rest don't.

"In the states that do have initiatives I expect efforts to get it on the ballot. The other half it will be much tougher. It's hard to get elected representatives to do this," Collins said.

Armantano is more optimistic about the spread of legalized pot. He compared the DOJ's announcement to the federal government's actions toward the end of alcohol prohibition in America a century ago, when states decided to stop following the federal ban on alcohol sales and the federal government said it would not step in and prosecute crimes.

"For first time we now have clear message from fed government saying they will not stand in way of states that wish to implement alternative regulatory schemes in lieu of federal prohibition," Armantano said.

He predicted that within the next one to three years, five or six other states may join Colorado and Washington in legalizing the drug, setting the stage for the rest of the country to follow.

The Age of Deception is Ending

In 2003, the U.S. Government as represented by the Department of Health and Human Services filed for, and was awarded a patent on cannabinoids. The reason? Because research into cannabinoids allowed pharmaceutical companies to acquire practical knowledge on one of the most powerful antioxidants and neuroprotectants known to the natural world.

The U.S. Patent 6630507 was specifically initiated when researchers found that cannabinoids had specific antioxidant properties making them useful in the treatment and prophylaxis of wide variety of oxidation associated diseases, such as ischemic, age-related, inflammatory and autoimmune diseases. The cannabinoids are found to have particular application as neuroprotectants, for example in limiting neurological damage following ischemic insults, such as stroke and trauma, or in the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and HIV dementia. Nonpsychoactive cannabinoids, such as cannabidoil, are particularly advantageous to use because they avoid toxicity that is encountered with psychoactive cannabinoids at high doses useful in the method of the present invention.

Besides the top 10 health benefits below, findings published in the journal *PLoS ONE*, researchers have now have now discovered that marijuana-like chemicals trigger receptors on human immune cells that can directly inhibit a type of human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV) found in late-stage AIDS.

Recent studies have even shown it to be an effective atypical anti-psychotic in treating schizophrenia, a disease many other studies have inconsistently found it causing.

Top 10 Health Benefits of Marijuana

1. Cancer

Cannabinoids, the active components of marijuana, inhibit tumor growth in laboratory animalsÃ, and also kill cancer cells. Western governments have known this for a long time yet they continued to suppress the information so that cannabis prohibition and the profits generated by the drug industry proliferated.

THC that targets cannabinoid receptors CB1 and CB2 is similar in function to endocannabinoids, which are cannabinoids that are naturally produced in the body and activate these receptors. The researchers suggest that THC or other designer agents that activate these receptors might be used in a targeted fashion to treat lung cancer.

2. Tourette's Syndrome Tourette's syndrome is a neurological condition characterized by uncontrollable facial grimaces, tics, and involuntary grunts, snorts and shouts.

Dr. Kirsten Mueller-Vahl of the Hanover Medical College in Germany led a team that investigated the effects of chemicals called cannabinols in 12 adult Tourette's patients. A single dose of the

cannabinol produced a significant reduction in symptoms for several hours compared to placebo, the researchers reported.

3. Seizures

Marijuana is a muscle relaxant and has "antispasmodic" qualities that have proven to be a very effective treatment for seizures. There are actually countless cases of people suffering from seizures that have only been able to function better through the use of marijuana.

4. Migraines

Since medicinal marijuana was legalized in California, doctors have reported that they have been able to treat more than 300,000 cases of migraines that conventional medicine couldn't through marijuana.

5. Glaucoma

Marijuana's treatment of glaucoma has been one of the best documented. There isn't a single valid study that exists that disproves marijuana's very powerful and popular effects on glaucoma patients.

6. Multiple Sclerosis

Marijuana's effects on multiple sclerosis patients became better documented when former talk-show host, Montel Williams began to use pot to treat his MS. Marijuana works to stop the neurological effects and muscle spasms that come from the fatal disease.

7. ADD and ADHD

A well documented USC study done about a year ago showed that marijuana is not only a perfect alternative for Ritalin but treats the disorder without any of the negative side effects of the pharmaceutical.

8. IBS and Crohn's

Marijuana has shown that it can help with symptoms of the chronic diseases as it stops nausea, abdominal pain, and diarrhea.

9. Alzheimer's

Despite what you may have heard about marijuana's effects on the brain, the Scripps Institute, in 2006, proved that the THC found in marijuana works to prevent Alzheimer's by blocking the deposits in the brain that cause the disease.

10. Premenstrual Syndrome

Just like marijuana is used to treat IBS, it can be used to treat the cramps and discomfort that causes PMS symptoms. Using marijuana for PMS actually goes all the way back to Queen Victoria.

Mounting Evidence Suggests Raw Cannabis is Best

Cannabinoids can prevent cancer, reduce heart attacks by 66% and insulin dependent diabetes by 58%. Cannabis clinician Dr. William Courtney recommends drinking 4 – 8 ounces of raw flower and leaf juice from any Hemp plant, 5 mg of Cannabidiol (CBD) per kg of body weight, a salad of Hemp seed sprouts and 50 mg of THC taken in 5 daily doses.

Why raw? Heat destroys certain enzymes and nutrients in plants. Incorporating raw cannabis allows for a greater availability of those elements. Those who require large amounts of cannabinoids without the psychoactive effects need to look no further than raw cannabis. In this capacity, it can be used at 60 times more tolerance than if it were heated.

Raw cannabis is considered by many experts as a dietary essential. As a powerful anti-inflammatory and antioxidant, raw cannabis may be right u there with garlic and tumeric.

Marco Torres, Prevent Disease

Waking Times

About the Author

Marco Torres is a research specialist, writer and consumer advocate for healthy lifestyles. He holds degrees in Public Health and Environmental Science and is a professional speaker on topics such as disease prevention, environmental toxins and health policy.

Marijuana Safer Than 'Every Other Medicine', Says Doctor

- CANADA HEALTH
- — MAY 30, 2014



With the debate over medical marijuana heating up, some argue that cannabis is safer than most prescription drugs.

Dr. Michael Hart of London, Ontario is one of a few physicians in Canada that have chosen to<u>voice their support</u> for medical marijuana.

Under a new <u>nationwide program</u> introduced in April, doctors can write cannabis recommendations for patients who they feel might benefit from the drug. Some, like Dr. Hart, have already <u>set up practices</u> centered around the alternative treatment.

However, many physicians groups have pushed back against the new rules, with a number of provincial colleges issuing their <u>own marijuana guidelines</u>.

"Most are just unsure of how to prescribe it" Likewise, both the Canadian Medical Association and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada have warned doctors against prescribing cannabis.

But Dr. Hart believes the response from these groups isn't necessarily representative of how most doctors feel. "I don't think a lot of physicians are actually against medicinal marijuana. Most are just unsure of how to prescribe it," he <u>explains.</u>

A lack of formal testing is what scares most doctors, <u>says</u> Dr. Louis Hugo Francescutti, president of the CMA. Until large-scale clinical trials are conducted, he notes, it's unlikely that the majority will get on board with the new program.

"If the evidence is there, then I don't think the profession would have any problems getting behind it. Doctors are not very keen to prescribe with a blindfold on," he adds.

Evidence from human trials is required before any new drug can be authorized as a medicine. However, no company has yet to sponsor the necessary research on medical marijuana.

The <u>problem</u> is that marijuana in its herbal form cannot be patented, which makes research unprofitable.

But even with limited clinical data, Dr. Hart believes there's enough reason to prescribe medical marijuana over other drugs. Prescription painkillers, for example, have proven to be far more deadly.

"Opioids kill more people per year than all illegal drugs combined. Marijuana has never killed anybody," says Dr. Hart.

In fact, marijuana's <u>lack of overdose risk</u> makes it less of a hazard than most drugs sold in pharmacies.

"I feel comfortable prescribing it because it's safer than just about every other medicine I prescribe," he concludes.

Australia's Cannabis Crisis Continues

Mar 4, 2015

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3/3/2015 By: Mike Robinson, Alternativeherbals.net

According to the latest National Drug Strategy Household Survey Cannabis remains to be the number one abused drug in Australia. That's according to their Authorities who seem confused when it comes to comparing statistics. The sheer number of prescription drug overdoses and other drug overdoses are rather high in Australia. "That does not happen with Cannabis" says Dr. Sanjay Gupta, CNN Chief Medical Correspondent. The people of the nation of Australia do not agree with authorities and are ringing a different bell. "Australians have an inalienable right to choose medical interventions. Parents and patients everywhere are being stripped of that right by a broken health systems and words on paper." said Medical Cannabis Users Association member (MCUA) Debra Lynch.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports deaths from opioid drugs in Australia rose steadily and prescription opioid drug overdoses have estimated to have increased 95.8% between 2007 and 2010, it seems hypocritical to insist on treating patients and parents of patients needing Cannabis as criminals. The Bureau furthers its nonsensical stance with this report "While we don't have comprehensive data for all of Australia, where we do collect it, we can see that deaths from pharmaceutical opioid medications are surpassing those from illicit drugs like heroin. Prescription medications contributed to 82.5% of Victoria's fatal drug overdoses in 2012 while illicit drugs were very low."

"This banning of Cannabis had no scientific base or reason for being – aside from a few self-interested, now long-dead businessmen who had vested interests elsewhere in the US." said Ms. Hester foundation member of the MCUA. Now, the aunt of a child with Dravet Syndrome, a rare and very lethal form of Epilepsy, has stepped forward and joined the MCUA. She's also made a statement on a social network that she'll actually put herself at risk to grow the medicine for her niece, Isabelle. This has led to multiple entities supplying

the aunt, Belinda Dooner, with U.S. and other governments published research on the efficacy of Cannabis as medicine. With the U.S. holding a patent for Medicinal Marijuana there's hardly an argument or debate of its abilities. The MCUA hopes to pass legislation by the name of "Dan's Law" to legalize Cannabis for medicinal use. Deborah Camacho, mother of Isabella was left almost speechless after her sister's statement.

"I feel blessed and fortunate to have family that care so much for Isabella that they'd be willing to risk their reputation and also risk getting into trouble with the law." Belinda Dooner has broken no law that is known of, but has rather stated an intent to grow medicine that should be legalized and is expected legalized. With the recent Fearless Father story of Adam Koessler, being arrested for attempting to save his 2 yr. old with Stage 4 Cancer by administering Cannabis oil, the harassment of patients and parents is seemingly non-stop. It's became such an urgent need to have law for those needing Cannabis that a representative of an Australian Nurses Cannabis Awareness program asked the Coalition for the Rights of Disabilities last week, in Colorado, to request intervention for the Fearless Father.

That request came from the same nurse willing to grow medicine for her niece - Isabella's aunt. Due to the request, contact has been made both through the U.S. Embassy in Australia and with the U.S. State Department in D.C.. How much they can do or what they can do remains to be answered although an executive clerk stated "We are aware of the Adam Koessler case and the position of the numerous people that have recently called." Not quite the anticipated response but it's only been a few days since the American Embassy and U.S. State Dept. have been contacted. A short response from yet another aide stated "We understand the needs of the parents and the people". The channels in which one must go through to attempt to free an individual such as Adam Koessler from the looming charges he faces in court this month are extraneous. In order to contact an Ambassador to a country it takes multiple clearances and the right individual with knowledge of how the entire process works.

It's hopeful that a Facebook group for the Fearless Father that is continuously active will help bring more attention to this man's plight and the fight for life for so many people of the nation. Australia has had multiple different positions over the past few years on Medicinal Cannabis. At one point it was distributed by suppliers and parents were able to talk to doctors and specialists. Now that talk has turned to fear as multiple parents have reported authorities being called on them and visiting them after mentioning the use of these very healing oils from the Cannabis plant. Quite frustrating indeed for both parents and the people of Australia. The multiple requests for intervention for the Fearless Father came across my desk as the Director of the Coalition for the Rights of Disabled People.

Together, with Chris Arceneaux of Indiana assisting in his role with the Coalition, in a current campaign on change.org and with U.S. legislators to further the Awareness Week to a month for Dravet Syndrome is underway. These requests made of and on behalf of the people of Australia are of very high interest to the Coalition which seeks the rights for disabled. Many of the kids with Epilepsy that are perishing have Dravet Syndrome and awareness of this seems to evade Australian officials. That, and this being the second time in the past year intercession has been requested of the Coalition. a firm response will be solicited and expected later this week.

As the U.S. slowly sees its states legalize and decriminalize not only for medicinal but also recreational many other nations watch. A child named Charlotte is well known for having Dravet Syndrome and being one of the original child faces of Cannabis. But none of this calms the people of Australia as they express outrage on social networks. James Wilkinson who makes a strong point "How many will die unnecessarily while we waiting for trials? This won't take that long to make happen. You're killing citizens or making them criminals because u won't change the law or your views" he states to his government. Darryl Davis of New South Wales makes an even stronger point "Why should some terminally ill patients be accepted for it but not others, do some lives matter more than others?"

"Patient Safety is always on the mind of nursing staff so too is providing quality professional care. In this outline the federal government shares the charter of rights for all Australians. It is my opinion that nurses should be able to talk to their patients about the positive therapeutic effects of cannabis and assist them with their medicine in hospitals if they are to continue to provide quality safe health care." Says Belinda Dooner about the situation in which children and now adults have perished.

A bit of good news, in the week in which the activist Dan Haslam passed his work shined through as Premier Mike Baird has was quoted in saying the state's first trials would start and an expert panel would meet in two weeks to decide which group would run those clinical trials. Those that are qualifying applicants shall be named in June per the Premier. The \$9 million in funds allocated for the trials will be released beginning in 2016 and first results will likely be available in 2017. With the number of children perishing from severe epilepsy and cancer growing by the day, although promising, for many families like the Haslam's, this is too little and way too late. But many are finding solace in that there is promise for the future thanks to the work of Haslam and those like him. This all comes after the very recent funeral proceedings for activist and patient Dan Haslam. A cancer patient himself, like the Fearless Fathers daughter, Dan found relief in Cannabis and was a very active voice and face of Cannabis Acceptance and in the push for legalization in that country. The Medical

Cannabis Users Association (MCUA) was created there after the Haslam story aired on Australian Television networks.

To add the loss of recent, three children perished in this same time frame to seizure activity known as Status Epilepticus which leads to S.U.D.E.P. or Sudden Unexplained Death in Epilepsy Patients. As an Epilepsy patient myself I don't quite understand the unexplained part of that acronym or cause of death nor do I understand any country, including my own, denying the medicine that's needed so desperately for the fight for life. The right to life itself is obstructed in this never ending battle for legalization in Australia and across the world. Parents of children with severe intractable epilepsy and adults now with refractory epilepsy, both medically resistant and deadly, have already or are finding out about Cannabis and using it with results I can personally account for. In 2013 I discovered it myself and it changed my life completely. There's no doubt Cannabis works to stop the life threatening seizures. Parents across the globe have been featured in dozens if not hundreds of articles regarding the positive results of Cannabis for much more than seizures and cancers. Stories have aired about parents using Cannas in the U.S. for everything from ADHD to Severe Autism. Others have reported that the natural herb calms their psychological disorders with studies to prove the thought isn't just in their heads, it's factual, peer reviewed and accepted studies that are now countless and published across the internet.

The plight of the people of Australia lays in the hands of the few that call themselves leaders. This must be proven as anyone may be given a title, and such title may be taken away. With adults that have cancer and other health issues perishing and little kids passing away it seems that common sense and peer reviewed scientific studies in the tens of thousands would prevail with the leaders of nations such as Australia - but how can it when the leaders of the free world, America, wait to pass legislation and allow the same thing on U.S. Soil. "How many children must die across this nation? Living in Colorado my whole life I've never thought that the balance of our country would fail the children as well as adults so drastically with prohibition of Cannabis. I'm glad to be a Coloradan" states Juanita Betancur, a lifelong resident of Colorado.

