

H.E.M.P. CT. Submitted by Ms.Cindy Day AKA Harvest Honey

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Connecticut Citizens for Marijuana Reform

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Marijuana prohibition has been a drastic failure in every sense of the word. Prohibition has failed to prevent the use of marijuana, and in fact marijuana use and availability has increased since the escalation of the "War on Drugs" in the 1980's. It has failed to make our country healthier, and has diverted billions of tax payer dollars away from the formation of holistic and accessible rehabilitation and education services, which are the real solutions to preventing drug abuse. It is a major component of violence along the Mexico-US border, where the majority of drug cartel profits come from marijuana sales to the United States.

CCMR—Connecticut Citizens for Marijuana Reform—advocates for a full shift in marijuana policy to end prohibition. This means three specific policy changes are necessary...

Full decriminalization — a first step

First is the full decriminalization of marijuana possession down to a petty infraction. Decriminalization means that marijuana use will become the lowest priority for law enforcement agencies, and individuals caught with possession will be given a fine comparable to a parking ticket. This will allow for marijuana possession to be removed from the scope of harmful mandatory minimum sentencing laws such as school zone drug laws. It will prevent marijuana users from being arrested, processed, and sentenced within the court system, freeing up resources and reducing government expenditures.

Medical marijuana — a second step

The second necessary policy change is the formation of a medical marijuana system in Connecticut, in order to accommodate for people who need marijuana for medical treatments, for disorders such as multiple sclerosis, glaucoma, HIV, post-traumatic stress disorder, and chronic pain (among many others). Marijuana has many proven medicinal properties, and can be used to treat a wide diversity of physical and emotional ailments. We believe that medical marijuana patients should not have to fear arrest and abuse for using medicine that works for them, and that the continued deprivation of medicine represents an extreme violation of civil liberties.

Regulation and tax system — a final step

The final policy change is the formation of a regulation and tax system to control the production and sale of marijuana, on a comparable level with alcohol. Another term for this is legalization. We know that recreational use of marijuana will never end, and it is not going to decrease any time soon. Rather than allowing the money for marijuana to go into the black market system, we believe that we could regulate the production, distribution, and sale of marijuana, and place taxes on these products in a equitable system to alcohol and tobacco. Connecticut has the potential to make billions of dollars in tax revenue from marijuana sales, money which can be reinvested in our communities and public health systems.

Compassion that laws can't bring

But we also know that marijuana prohibition will not end once the laws have changed, because our society will continue to discriminate and judge those adults who choose to responsibly consume marijuana (either medicinally or recreationally). CCMR believes in going beyond policy, to engage with local communities and inspire mature and informed dialogue about the role marijuana plays in our lives and our world. We believe that this grassroots approach, based upon compassion and sensibility, rather than propaganda and sensationalism, will truly begin to change the hearts and minds of Connecticut citizens in ways that changed laws never will.

We envision a world where marijuana can no longer be used as an element of social control or racial oppression. We envision a Connecticut where we re-prioritize our state budget to fund schools, sustainable jobs programs, and mental health and rehabilitation clinics, not prisons. We believe Connecticut can be a leader in this national movement for social justice. We will get there, we believe Connecticut must get there, and we hope you will join us in this fight. *Here Ends Marijuana Prohibition!*

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