

CITY OF OAKLAND



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Office of the Mayor
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December 20, 2007

The Honorable John Conyers
Chairman,
House Judiciary Committee
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Ranking Member,
House Judiciary Committee
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Conyers and Representative Lamar:

Recently, property owners who lease to medical cannabis dispensaries across the State of California have received notices from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) threatening these individuals with arrest and property asset forfeiture. Many of these notices have been received in local jurisdictions currently in the process of passing ordinances that regulate and control medical cannabis dispensing facilities or in locales that already have these regulations in place. At least one such letter has been received in Oakland, which has a long history of successful regulation of our four well-managed, licensed dispensaries. In recognition of your recent pledge to question the DEA directly about these tactics, I am writing to request your support in providing immediate, comprehensive and aggressive oversight of the DEA's ongoing interference with implementation of our state's medical cannabis laws and our local municipal regulations.

We understand that there is a difference between Federal and California law in regards to medical cannabis. Despite the difference, it is the responsibility of state and local governments to uphold the will of voters and adopt sensible guidelines to regulate the provision of medical cannabis in our communities. Voters in California and across the nation support the use of medical cannabis and want safe, well-regulated access. Medical cannabis dispensing facilities are a sensible community-based response to the need for

safe access and represent the State of California's effort to fully implement our state's medical cannabis law at a local level.

The importance of these facilities is underscored by the reluctance of the federal government to address the issue of medical cannabis in a meaningful way. As you are aware, the administration has steadfastly refused to recognize the rising tide of data showing that cannabis is a safe and effective medicine for a number of conditions for which standard medicines often fail to provide relief. The effect of the DEA actions will be to force seriously ill patients to either do without medicine their doctor has recommended or to obtain it on the streets.

Local regulations are the key to preventing abuse of state medical cannabis laws and protecting legally qualified patients, their care providers and neighborhoods. The DEA's recent surge tactics, such as the dissemination of threatening letters to property owners and unrelenting raids that continue to place citizens in harm's way, undermine state and local authority, and jeopardize the integrity of state law. We urge the House Judiciary Committee to expeditiously hold hearings and examine this very important issue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ronald V. Dellums" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ronald V. Dellums
Mayor