

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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January 30, 2008

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lamar Smith  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Conyers and Ranking Member Smith:

Property owners who lease to medical cannabis dispensaries across the State of California have recently 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. In recognition of your recent pledge to question the DEA directly about these tactics, I am writing to request immediate and comprehensive oversight of the DEA's ongoing interference with implementation of our State's medical cannabis laws.

I understand that there is a difference between Federal and California laws in regards to medical cannabis. Despite the difference, State and local governments must continue 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 efforts to fully implement our State's medical cannabis law.

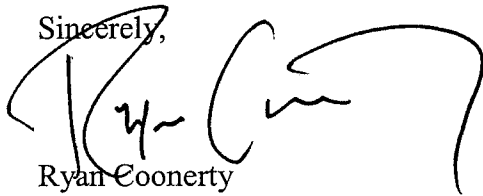
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Local regulations are the key to preventing abuse of State medical cannabis law and protecting legally qualified patients, their care providers, and neighborhoods. DEA tactics, such as the dissemination of threatening letters to property owners and unrelenting raids that continue to place citizens in harm's way, undermine State and local authority and jeopardize the integrity of State law. I urge the House Judiciary Committee to expeditiously hold hearings and examine the following: what impact the DEA is having on the ability of local governments to fully implement State law, whether the Department of Justice (DOJ) intends to initiate forfeiture proceedings against landlords who lease to dispensing facilities, how much Federal law enforcement resources have been spent to interfere with State implementation efforts, whether the DOJ/DEA believes this is a wise and appropriate use of their discretionary power and limited resources, and how State and Federal governments can work together to resolve the conflict between Federal and State medical cannabis laws.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Coonerty', written over a large, light-colored scribble or watermark.

Ryan Coonerty  
Mayor

cc: Senate Judiciary Committee

Michele Leonhart, Acting Administrator, Drug Enforcement Administration

Michael Mukasey, Attorney General, Department of Justice