



Office of the Mayor

Tom Bates
Mayor

April 24, 2008

The Honorable John Conyers
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Honorable John Conyers,

I write to you today on behalf of our medical marijuana patients, dispensary operators, and the property owners who rent to them.

Berkeley voters along with 56% of California voters passed Proposition 215 in 1996. Our three dispensaries have each been in operation for nearly a decade now, providing vital medicine and other wellness services to qualified patients. They are regulated, tax-paying members of our community; maintain clean, safe properties and play an active role in Berkeley's civic life.

As Mayor of a city with medical cannabis dispensaries, I remain supportive of physician recommended medical marijuana to combat pain and nausea caused by such illnesses as HIV/AIDS, cancer and multiple sclerosis. Medical cannabis dispensaries provide patients with a safe, clean and compassionate environment for medical treatment and related services.

On January 29, 2008 The Berkeley City Council unanimously passed a resolution declaring it a sanctuary for medical marijuana patients, providers, and landlords. This resolution also called for an end to the DEA's aggressive tactics. Other cities have taken similar steps, but we urgently need help from our Congressional leaders to stem this federal interference in state health care law.

Like many major cities, Berkeley needs the assistance of the DEA in combating serious drug trafficking. However, Berkeley strongly opposes Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) interference in medical cannabis dispensing and the recent issuing sensational threatening letter to these property owners threatening asset forfeiture and imprisonment.

On behalf of my constituents and the thousands of seriously ill medical marijuana patients across this state, I strongly urge the House Judiciary Committee to investigate the Drug Enforcement Agency's tactics against vital medical cannabis laws and to set a date for the opening of Congressional Hearings on this matter.

Sincerely,

Tom Bates
Mayor