



## OTFCA Medical Marijuana Position Statement

Drug legalization theorists believe that eliminating drug prohibition would reduce the damage that comes from drug abuse. They refer to this as “harm reduction” in many of their writings. They, a small minority in our country, believe that law enforcement, drug education, prevention and treatment groups are unable to address our country’s drug problems. Indeed it is a struggle, but our society cannot subject itself to a proposed solution that would result in increased violence, increased crime, increased drug abusers, increased treatment costs and additional harm to families and communities, among other things. Proponents of legalization provide half-hearted reasons in support of legalization that are self-benefiting and will only make the problem worse, and Ohio’s Multijurisdictional Task Forces are not willing to give up the fight.

Marijuana is a Scheduled 1 drug under the provisions of the Controlled Substance Act simply because it has no accepted medical use and has a high potential for abuse. No drugs are legalized until the medical and scientific communities, through long term study, determine that the benefits of the drug far outweigh the risks. Current scientific evidence indicates that marijuana is addictive and that the use of the drug impairs the body’s physical and mental functions. It is associated with cancer, immune system deficiencies, heart disease, memory loss and other medical conditions. How many drugs do you know that are ingested by smoking them?

Pro marijuana advocates have been trying for decades to get the drug legalized. Most campaigns ignore the harmful effects of the drug and promise a reduction in crime levels and additional tax revenues as justification for legalization. These claims are not based on facts. Any revenues received by Ohio would only be used to provide treatment to the new generation of marijuana users this law would create. Does this make any sense? Any drug decriminalization would have a devastating impact on law enforcement and our communities.

Ohio has seen the results of medicinal marijuana laws in other states in a negative way. Ohio’s multijurisdictional task forces have seized drugs illegally distributed from marijuana dispensaries in California. The fact is, they can’t grow the marijuana fast enough to keep up with those receiving it as a medicine. Doctors are now writing marijuana prescriptions for people that have no legitimate illnesses as it is a money making scheme for them. In order to keep up with the escalating clientele at these dispensaries, commercial marijuana from Mexico is being used and distributed across the United States. Regulations are never discussed or developed before the laws are passed, creating a debacle within marijuana legalized states.

The trafficking of marijuana can be linked to many crimes. We need only to look to the United States southern border to see the violence from drug cartels. This violence, although related to the distribution of all drugs, is primarily about marijuana. It is the biggest cash crop for Mexican cartels and the reason for all the violence in the southwestern United States and Mexico. Currently, the criminal penalties in most states and Ohio have been diluted to a point where a subject in Ohio must have one kilogram or above to even possibly see any jail time.

Many have referred to marijuana as being a “gateway” drug that eventually may lead to the user trying harder drugs. Studies have shown both sides to this theory, and although the debate continues, law enforcement will tell you that marijuana is almost always found in locations where individuals are arrested with harder drugs. It may not be scientific based, but law enforcement in your state can assure you, based on our experience, that marijuana is indeed the first step for most drug abusers.

The goal of these individuals and groups seeking to legalize marijuana for medicinal purposes is the eventual decriminalization of the drug entirely. They believe that society would be better off if everyone had the ability to grow, sell and smoke marijuana without any penalties, that society would actually save money and we would be rewarded with an additional freedom. They speak of compassion for the sick, who already have legalized medicine available to them. How about compassion for the public that is fed up with drug traffickers, abusers, other criminals, and all the costs associated with marijuana and other drugs? Any “Cost to Benefit” analysis would clearly show that the idea of legalizing marijuana is a bad idea. Greed is the only explanation behind those financing these ballot initiatives.

As these groups seek out your signature to get the initiatives on the ballot, please consider the following:

1. There will be no clarity to what is being voted on.
2. The groups proposing the legalization of medicinal marijuana will select the initial members for a new Cannabis Control Commission.
3. The new Cannabis Control Commission, comprised of pro-marijuana individuals, will create all regulations without any say from your law enforcement community.

We encourage you, the Citizens of Ohio, to do your own investigations. Talk with your local law enforcement, prosecutors, substance abuse groups and health agencies, who can provide you with valuable information so you can make an informed decision come November 2012.

**Please support your local Drug Task Forces**

Ohio Task Force Commander’s Association

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