



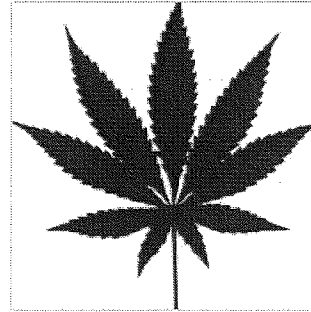
ILCAAAP

Illinois Church Action on Alcohol & Addiction Problems

March 13, 2015

Marijuana Action Alert

Legislation to legalize and decriminalize marijuana



Federal bill would legalize marijuana (S. 683)

Three U. S. Senators introduced a bill this week to reclassify marijuana as a Schedule II drug, the classification for drugs that have a legitimate medical use but also have a "high potential for abuse", The New York Times reported.

The bill would allow banks and credit unions to provide financial services to marijuana-related businesses and would allow the VA to prescribe medical marijuana to veterans, both of which are currently prohibited by federal law.

SB 33 expands medical marijuana for PTSD passed out of Committee

The medical cannabis pilot program is not yet operational, yet this bill seeks to expand it. **There are measures in place within the law for the Department of Public Health to expand the list of Debilitating Medical Conditions.**

While the original purpose of PTSD was to address combat trauma, now people experiencing a wide variety of difficult life situations and being diagnosed with a form of PTSD. There are no treatment criteria for when cannabis would be employed, for mild levels, moderate or severe. And there are no reliable, double-blind studies that have determined whether cannabis works better than existing medications or placebo.

New research shows that marijuana may worsen the symptoms for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and increase violent behavior, as reported in *Medscape*.

In committee, many Senators questioned if SB 33 would create a huge "loophole" for many people to start using marijuana. The State's Attorney Generals opposed saying marijuana is not a VA approved treatment for PTSD.

HB 218 to decriminalize marijuana passed out of House committee

HB 218 treats the possession of marijuana (cannabis) like a speeding ticket. HB 218 reduces the penalty from a Class 4 felony to a misdemeanor for possession of between 30 grams of cannabis, (75 "joints") and up to 500 grams (1,250 joints). Allowing possession of such large amounts of marijuana will lead to more marijuana use, especially among young people.

NYPD Commissioner Links Legalized Pot to Rise in Shootings

Shootings in New York City have gone up 17 percent in the past year, and according to NYPD Commissioner Bill Bratton, marijuana legalization across the United States is partly to blame. Now, in New York City, marijuana is not completely legalized, but it has been decriminalized to some degree and the NYPD has stopped arresting people with small amounts of marijuana on their person.

Bratton referred to marijuana as "the seemingly innocent drug that's been legalized around the country," and says that yes, it's connected to a rise in shootings.

He explained, "In this city, people are killing each other over marijuana more so than anything that we had to deal with in the 80s and 90s with heroin and cocaine... We just see marijuana everywhere when we make these arrests, when we get these guns off the streets." [Read more](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

Contact your [State Representative](#) and ask him/her to **oppose HB 218**, to decriminalize and legalize marijuana.

Contact your [State Senator](#) and ask him/her to **oppose SB 33** to expand medical marijuana.

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