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Illinois Church Action on Alcohol & Addiction Problems

May 22, 2015

Marijuana Action Alert

Marijuana Decriminalization (HB 218) Bill Passes



A gas and oil bill (HB 3215) was amended to include changes for the marijuana bill prior to the Senate vote on HB 218 to garner more votes. The Senate sponsor promised to hold HB 218 while he waits for the trailer bill (HB 3215) to pass the House so both bills would be sent to the governor at the same time. [See status of bill here.](#)

However, the headlines in the Colorado cannabis newspaper jumped the gun by saying, Illinois legislation to decriminalize marijuana possession headed to governor. The vote comes the same day a bill was approved to extend Illinois' medical marijuana program by two or more years. [Read article here.](#)

HB 218 treats the possession of 15 grams of marijuana (37 "joints") like a speeding ticket. The person receives a Uniform Cannabis Citation, pays a fine of \$55 to \$125 and pleads guilty. There is no age limit. Anyone middle school or high school age and up could possess marijuana. More people will use and deliver marijuana if the penalties are reduced.

The House sponsor, Rep. Kelly Cassidy, D-Chicago, said **she doubted that decriminalization would soon lead to the legalization of marijuana in Illinois. But she said the trend is in that direction**, reported the *Chicago Tribune*.

One little-reported provision of HB 218 would change the state's zero-tolerance law for driving with marijuana in one's system.

Marijuana remains in the body much longer than alcohol, after the effects of pot's psychoactive component, THC, have worn off. So instead of drivers being deemed intoxicated with any amount of pot in their systems, the new limit, if the bill becomes law, would be 15 nanograms of THC per milliliter of blood. [Read more.](#)

NOTE: The per se limits in Colorado, Washington, and Montana are 5ng/ml, Nevada and Ohio are 2ng/ml, Pennsylvania is 1ng/ml.

Check to see how your Senator and Representative voted.

FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

- Contact your State Representative and State Senator. Thank those who voted NO on HB 218 to prevent drug use and safeguard the citizens.
- The Governor opposes extending the medical marijuana pilot program (HB 3299) and will review all legislation that comes to his desk. Contact the Governor's office to let him know that you oppose the expansion of medical marijuana and the decriminalization of marijuana. Ask him to VETO HB 218 and HB 3299.
- Share this Alert with your faith community and ask them to PRAY.
- Forward to 10 others.

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