

## **2008 RESOLUTION APPROVED**

### **AT THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

#### **AUGUST 1 BUSINESS MEETING**

##### **Resolution: Medical Marijuana**

From: Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division

WHEREAS the Society for the Study of Social Problems find the following:

1. Federal drug policy on marijuana threatens the health and well being of thousands of Americans by prohibiting even the medicinal use of cannabis under physician supervision in states with medical marijuana laws. The federal government has actively impeded research on the medical use of marijuana despite patient and physician reports that it may help to relieve such debilitating symptoms as nausea, pain, and loss of appetite associated with serious illnesses.
2. In February of this year, the American College of Physicians — representing 124,000 oncologists, neurologists and other doctors of internal medicine — released a position paper declaring that the scientific evidence “supports the use of medical marijuana in certain conditions” and calling on the federal government to reclassify marijuana to permit medical use. In addition, the American Nurses Association, American Public Health Association, American Academy of HIV Medicine, and many other national organizations are on record supporting safe and legal access to medical marijuana for patients whose doctors recommend it.
3. The American public, too, overwhelmingly supports patients’ rights to use medical marijuana; national polls show that more than three out of four Americans favor its legal use. Already twelve states — Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, Rhode Island, and Washington — have enacted medical marijuana laws.
4. However, until there are changes in federal drug policy, the threat to patients and caregivers of arrest by federal agents continues.

There are now two pieces of federal legislation pending that would help to alleviate this threat:

A. The Hinchey-Rohrabacher medical marijuana amendment:

The DEA has conducted dozens of raids on legal and registered medical marijuana patient collectives and dispensaries in states such as California where the medical use of cannabis is legal under state law; the Department of Justice (DOJ) is currently prosecuting more than three-dozen licensed medical cannabis patients and care providers.

The Hinchey-Rohrabacher Amendment would limit the ability of DOJ to arrest and prosecute patients and providers who are acting within the limits of their state law by prohibiting the DEA from using any funds to interfere with state medical marijuana laws. The amendment, which has been proposed in each of the past several sessions, will once again be voted on this summer.

B. The Medical Marijuana Patient Protection Act.

H.R. 5842 would end marijuana's classification as a Schedule I drug to allow doctors to prescribe it for medical use. Additionally, this bill would protect medical marijuana patients who use marijuana legally under state law from arrest and jail.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the SSSP supports both the Hinchey-Rohrabacher medical marijuana amendment and the Medical Marijuana Patient Protection Act.

The SSSP membership directs that copies of this resolution to all federal legislators and the administrative offices of the DEA and DOJ.