



Alaska State Legislature  
Alaska Congressional Delegation  
*via email*

May 20, 2017

Dear State and National Representatives:

We, as members of the Alaska Marijuana Industry Association need our State and National legislative representatives to support your constituents and block all Federal government overreach into our State business.

The Marijuana Industry across the United States continues to work to correct the misperceptions created by a barrage of propaganda over decades about the evils of marijuana. After making recent progress, we find ourselves again battling for a level playing field; forced to push back against threatened Federal interference in State decisions to legitimize cannabis.

The road from back alley black market to a legal, regulated, and community-supporting industry has been anything but smooth. However, today the citizens of our states have voted to legalize marijuana, and more are coming on board. Despite being in an environment of sometimes complicated regulatory development,

we adhere to the rules and regulations in place, and continue to move forward and keep this industry out in the open and under regulatory scrutiny.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions has issued a memo that we find particularly distressing. The April 5, 2017 Department of Justice (DOJ) memorandum "Update on the Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety," unfairly includes references to the marijuana industry. The effort to reduce crime was announced as follows:

**Attorney General Jeff Sessions Updates  
United States Attorneys and DOJ  
Component Heads on the Department's Task Force on  
Crime Reduction and Public Safety**

As part of that update, the Attorney General announced the creation of Task Force subcommittees that will focus on a variety of issues including developing violent crime reduction strategies, supporting prevention and re-entry efforts, updating charging and sentencing policies, reviewing asset forfeiture guidance, reducing illegal immigration and human trafficking, combating hate crimes, and evaluating marijuana enforcement policy.

[This memo](#), appears to be an attempt by Attorney General Sessions to correct the ills that plague America through reduction of violent crimes, is nonetheless misguided in that it includes  
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Federal marijuana enforcement policy within a task force on “violent crime reduction,” “human trafficking,” and “hate crimes”.

This categorization flies in the face of research and science that indicates that it is misdirected. Recent scientific research reveals that where there is access to legal and regulated marijuana, crime rates decrease. We direct you to the 50-state study by Dr. Robert Morris of University of Texas (UT) Dallas. The summary of this University of Texas at Dallas article reads as follows:

“A professor of criminology found that legalization of medical marijuana is not an indicator of increased crime. It actually may be related to reductions in certain types of violent crime. The study tracked crime rates across all 50 states between 1990 and 2006, when 11 states legalized marijuana for medical use: Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington. Since the time period the study covered, 20 states and Washington, D.C., have legalized marijuana for medical use.”

While additional research needs to be done to study the correlation between crime and marijuana, especially now that legal marijuana is available, it is counterintuitive to associate violent crime and criminality with the inspected, regulated, and enforced industries that exist in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and Colorado.

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We also are concerned about the Attorney General's reported remarks indicating that legalizing marijuana makes more smokers of all Americans. In an article in [Politico](#), [Josh Gerstein](#) quotes Sessions as saying,

"Most of you probably know I don't think America is going to be a better place when more people of all ages and particularly young people start smoking pot..."

Studies from Colorado indicate that the current trend is to the contrary. As quoted in that article from Reuters,

"These statistics clearly debunk the theory that making marijuana legal for adults will result in more teen use," said Mason Tvert, spokesman for the Marijuana Policy Project.

In addition, the regulated industry under state oversight where marijuana is legal, provides a means to keep marijuana out of the hands of underage users.

We of the Marijuana Industry want to make clear that we support the DOJ in its efforts to control violent crime and stop human trafficking. We should be putting our national economic muscle and manpower into the prevention and enforcement of serious crimes.

Simultaneously, we want to make sure that these efforts are not designed to be a backdoor approach to take away the rights of the Alaska State Legislature & Alaska Congressional Delegation

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states that have decided to allow legalized marijuana; or use federal manipulation to undermine regulated state marijuana industries that operate in the light of day, pay our taxes like other businesses, and abide by the laws that are established by our state and local governments.

As an industry, we know that there are efforts to move toward acceptance by multiple members of Congress and we are taking steps in the right direction. The March introduction of a bill to finally end cannabis prohibition is a step in the right direction.

The article from [civilized.life](http://civilized.life) website by James McClure says it succinctly:

“The new legislation was introduced by Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon), and Congressmen Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon) and Jared Polis (D-Colorado). If passed, it would remove cannabis from the Controlled Substances Act, which would then enable the FDA to officially recognize marijuana as medicine. On top of that, the new legislation would allow each state to determine its own laws for medical and recreational marijuana without worrying about federal interference from Attorney General Jeff Sessions - an outspoken opponent of marijuana legalization.”

It boils down to the same issue time and time again: The desire of Alaska State Legislature & Alaska Congressional Delegation

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Federal enforcement to punish State legalized marijuana and its beneficiaries.

Finally, when the President indicates that they are NOT going to prosecute medical marijuana. It appears that they leave the door open for future enforcement here as well. In an email, Robert Capecchi, the director of federal policies for the Marijuana Policy Project said, "...there is still a need for a long-term solution."

This is why we are appealing to legislators - Local, State, and Federal, to come to grips with the will of 60% of the people of these United States. These citizens who feel that there is a need to stop wasting resources, time, and tax dollars prosecuting and persecuting an industry that is making a concerted attempt to make a beneficial shift in the perception of marijuana.

Legitimate marijuana businesses in states where the residents have voted for legalization are conducting community outreach by providing cannabis education to the uninformed, and safe consumption information to those who would seek medical relief. Our goal is to use facts, scientific research, and clarity in order to eliminate confusion which continues to stigmatize the legal cannabis industry.

The Marijuana Industry leaders will continue to advance facts regarding marijuana usage and benefits. We look forward to a more level-headed approach to a movement that is already embraced by the majority of American citizens.

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We need our U.S. Senators and Representatives and our State Legislators to serve as a bulwark for the protection of states' rights.

Respectfully submitted,

The Board of Directors and Members of  
The Alaska Marijuana Industry Association