



CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD

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ABBE LAND
Councilmember

March 27, 2008

The Honorable John Conyers
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Conyers:

As the Mayor of West Hollywood, a California municipality that supports the rights of patients' access to medical marijuana, I am dismayed by the ongoing actions of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) where dozens of medicinal marijuana dispensaries and collectives in California have been threatened by raids and closures. I believe that this sets a frightening precedent of federal agencies overturning the will of local governments to decide how its citizens are able to treat their chronic illness. You have recently expressed your concern regarding this behavior, and I hope that you will use your authority as Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee to fully investigate the tactics used by the DEA in an effort to strip sick Californians of their right to access medicinal marijuana.

Time and again, voters and communities throughout California have disagreed with federal policy against the use of medical marijuana. In 1996, California voters approved Proposition 215, the Compassionate Use Act, which exempted patients and doctors who possess or cultivate medicinal cannabis for health care purposes. Californians mandated the end of government persecution of those who seek to use marijuana in a safe and responsible manner to treat illness. I believe that the federal government, too, should respect the spirit and will of our voters.

If the DEA continues to use its threatening and invasive tactics to annihilate cannabis dispensaries, our own constituency is at risk of losing access to this vital component of some of their rehabilitative regimens. Currently, the City of West Hollywood is served by four marijuana dispensaries that are regulated by local policy. These policies were developed through a partnership between the dispensaries, residents, and the City Council and have successfully maintained the community's desire to preserve patients' rights without adverse impacts to our neighborhoods.



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Our community policies and regulations dedicated to improving residents' quality of life should not be subjugated by coercive intrusion by the DEA. On behalf of my constituency and the voters of California, I urge you and your colleagues on the House Judiciary Committee to examine the DEA's recent behavior toward well regulated marijuana dispensaries and evaluate its impact on the validity of our relevant local policy.

Sincerely,



John J. Duran, Mayor
City of West Hollywood