

House Republicans Further Attack Oregon Medical Marijuana Patients

House Republicans show continued contempt and disregard for the health and well being of Oregon citizens registered in the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program, as demonstrated by the gutting and stuffing of HB 2693. Intended to insure the protection of patients' rights under the Oregon Medical Marijuana Act, pages 2-4 of the bill have been removed and replaced with changes making employment more difficult for those who legally use cannabis as medicine in Oregon.

The bill, being heard by the House Judiciary Committee Monday at 8:30 in Hearing Room 357, adds having marijuana in the person's system to the definition of use of medical marijuana, and creates an anti-medical marijuana protection for employers which allows an employer to treat a doctor-recommended therapeutic cannabis patient as a criminal in violation of work place 'protocol'.

According to House Republicans, employers need not accommodate the medical use of marijuana in the workplace nor be precluded from maintaining a drug free work place, further demonstrating a refusal on the part of House Republicans to recognize medical marijuana as a safe medicine rather than a dangerous, illegal drug.

This bad bill arrives on the heels of HB5077, which passed the House this week, and is likely to pass the Senate soon, which transfers nearly a million dollars in funds from the OMMP to DHS to help balance the budget. This will likely result in the Department of Human Services raising registration fees for sick and suffering Oregonians registered in the program.

Laird Funk, Volunteer Lobbyist for medical marijuana issues and an early registrant in the OMMP, knows well the problems facing OMMP registrants. He lost his national award-winning career in wastewater management due to a "Drug Free" policy crafted by his employer. Mr. Funk said in regards to HB2693's re-stuffing,

"The main problem posed to employers by the existence of medical marijuana-using employees is not that of the supposed danger of such persons in the workforce or their relative productivity. It is that allowing known marijuana users to continue working has the real possibility of quickly undermining the claim that marijuana users do represent a safety or productivity problem by demonstrating that they do not at all differ from non-users. Such a demonstration would require that the invasive process of determining employee suitability through urinalysis be reconsidered regarding its utility, an embarrassing concept for the current drug warriors pushing these attempts at demonizing marijuana users."

"Marijuana should be treated like other medicines. Impairment resolves when the main psychoactive component of marijuana, THC, returns to low blood levels at 3 to 4 hours after smoking marijuana. Urine testing does not prove impairment it only proves recent use. Registration in the Oregon Medical Marijuana Program should never be sole cause for termination of employment." said Dr. Rick Bayer.

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