



# MEDICAL CANNABIS RESOURCE CENTER

## **Another Dance Around Marijuana Prohibition, Oregonian Mocks Medical Cannabis**

The same Portland, Oregon newspaper that said cannabis ("marijuana") is not medicine during the 1998 OMMA campaign has printed an editorial parroting prohibitionist lies concerning I-28, the Dispensary Initiative and activist's ("pot-heads") in general.

We need to respond to the Oregonian in a big way. The Oregonian is the state's leading newspaper and they just said the whole medical marijuana program is a charade. They aren't just attacking I 28 - they are attacking the whole OMMA program and all the patients who qualify to treat their severe pain. We need to respond with Letters to the editor, with calls complaining about belittling pain patients, and with a protest at their office. We need patients to come out and voice their opinions on this.

This is a critical moment. This outrageous editorial attacking the very foundation of medical marijuana gives us an opportunity to respond. We must respond strongly. Stand up or lay down.

(1- Rally - #1- Thu., 7/29, 10:30a at Oregonian Office  
Folks are organizing a protest rally on Thursday at 10:30am at the Oregonian office at 1320 SW Broadway in downtown Portland. Bring rally signs, patient testimonials, and anything that might educate them.

(2- and otherwise Protest! Comment by email - Here is the email for sending letters to the Oregonian: [letters@news.oregonian.com](mailto:letters@news.oregonian.com) - and/or Writing, calling, visiting, or thru the -

(3- Web. Leave comments, get others to do the same, blog and otherwise rebut - see, NORMLs Radical Russ response below -

## **Another dance around marijuana -**

**The Oregonian Editorial Board - Published:  
Sunday, July 25, 2010**

Oregonians will be asked this fall to approve an expansion of medicinal pot; if marijuana backers were more forthright, they'd call the question on legalization Let the charades begin: Another "medical marijuana" measure is coming to the fall ballot.

Of course, the advocates insist that the sprawling legalized network of marijuana dispensaries envisioned by Initiative 28 is all about providing compassionate and convenient "medicine" to Oregonians who suffer from such things as glaucoma, nausea from cancer treatment and the wasting associated with HIV/AIDs. Never mind that of the 36,380 Oregon "patients" who now hold cards that protect them from state prosecution for smoking marijuana, 534 reported suffering from glaucoma, while 32,614 checked the box for "severe pain" as one of their

qualifying medical conditions. Anyone over the age of 18 with a doctor's note that says they can benefit from smoking marijuana can apply to the Oregon Health Division for a card.

We're not yet prepared to take a position on this or any other ballot measure on the fall ballot. Yes, there may be a compelling case to be made for giving Oregonians with legitimate medical needs more convenient access to marijuana. However, the whole wink-and-nod farce that has characterized the politics of medical marijuana has become downright offensive.. Frankly, we'd much rather have the kind of open, intellectually honest debate they're having now down in Oakland, Calif, where the City Council just voted 5-2 to license four huge marijuana farms of up to 100,000 square feet apiece, and plan to use the tax revenue to close a \$83 million city deficit this year. At least Californians, who have already had the pleasant high of seeing marijuana dispensaries crowd into mini-malls and storefronts in communities all across their states, are having an honest-to-goodness vote in November on legalizing recreational use of marijuana.

After all, that's what this is about. Forget the euphemisms -- what after all, is a "dispensary" anyway? It's a store the state legally entitles to sell pot. What's going on here is nothing more or less than a backdoor effort to expand marijuana use while dancing gingerly around federal law that still prohibits the production, distribution and use of the drug. Why not call the real question? Maybe a majority of Oregonians believe marijuana ought to be the legal and social equivalent of alcohol -- produced and sold openly, regulated and taxed. Jeffrey Miron, a Harvard economist, has estimated that marijuana prohibition costs the nation \$7 billion in tax revenue, not to mention the costs of the futile effort to police it. Maybe Oregonians want a piece of that for their underfunded schools and state government.

But then why continue the medical marijuana charade? Why all these "dispensaries" and this facade of regulation, such as the prohibition of anyone convicted of a felony crime in the past five years from getting a license to open his or her marijuana store? Does that mean someone just finishing up a hitch of six years or more in Oregon State Prison for assault or rape would be a fine proprietor of your neighborhood marijuana dispensary? Who knows? Who cares? Not supporters of Initiative 28. Ultimately, their measure isn't about medical marijuana or people suffering with glaucoma or nausea. It's about moving ever closer to a future of legalized recreational use of marijuana. If they are so certain that would be good for Oregonians, they ought to have the courage to call the question. Visit > [http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2010/07/another\\_dance\\_around\\_marijuana.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2010/07/another_dance_around_marijuana.html) < for source of story and to leave comments.



**Oregonian Editorial Board denigrates "medical marijuana" "patients" - By "Radical" Russ Belville on July 26, 2010**

In their latest editorial, entitled "Another Dance Around Marijuana", the editorial board addressed I-28, the initiative that would create a regulated dispensary system in Oregon. The gist of their argument is a dare to dispensary proponents to just be honest and come out in favor of legalization, instead of dancing around the "charade" of "medical marijuana". It's worth reading the whole thing (and leaving a comment!) so that you'll understand the tone I used in my comment below:

*"Anyone over the age of 18 with a doctor's note that says they can benefit from smoking marijuana can apply to the Oregon Health Division for a card."*

False. The person must have legitimate medical records documenting afflictions with one or more of nine qualifying conditions within the past three years, accompanied by a state form signed by a doctor, often a 2nd doctor, recommending marijuana as a treatment. This is not California – getting a card is difficult and expensive.

*"medical marijuana" ... "medicine" ... "patients" ...*

Misleading. Use of "scare quotes" to denigrate the fact that, indeed, cannabis is a recognized medicine in the state of Oregon. Not just from the 1998 Medical Marijuana Act, but also from the recent move by the Oregon Board of Pharmacy to place cannabis in Schedule II, a category that includes drugs with recognized medical benefit in the state. It is also recognized by the American Medical Association and the American College of Physicians as a medicine, the US Veteran's Administration, and thirteen other US states and the District of Columbia. Cannabis has over 20,000 published scientific studies behind it, federal patent #6630507 for cannabinoids and antioxidants and neuroprotectants, and the US government still sends this medicine by mail to four patients, including Oregonian Elvy Musikka for (guess what) her glaucoma.

So, you'd think with that much evidence behind it, "editors" at your "newspaper" could provide better "journalism".

*"Never mind that of the 36,380 Oregon "patients" who now hold cards that protect them from state prosecution for smoking marijuana, 534 reported suffering from glaucoma, while 32,614 checked the box for "severe pain" as one of their qualifying medical conditions."*

Misleading. You fail to mention that patients can register for more than one condition. If you have cancer, you likely have pain and nausea. If you have HIV/AIDS, you have pain. There are 17,591 recommendations for conditions other than pain, so, potentially, those patients registered for pain alone may be less than half of the registrants.

Furthermore, 26% of US adults, according to the CDC, have suffered from a chronic recurring pain that has lasted >24hrs. These are migraine sufferers, car crash survivors, and people with all sorts of diseases and conditions that aren't listed in the Oregon Medical Marijuana Act per se, yet create a life of unbearable pain.

Considering the recent FDA warnings about the skyrocketing liver damage rates and overdoses from over-the-counter NSAIDs and prescription opioids, we should be trumpeting the use of medical cannabis for those in severe pain as a medicine of first resort, not last. We certainly shouldn't be denigrating people who without medical marijuana would live in what you call "severe pain".

*"Ultimately, their measure isn't about medical marijuana or people suffering with glaucoma or nausea. It's about moving ever closer to a future of legalized recreational use of marijuana. If they are so certain that would be good for Oregonians, they ought to have the courage to call the question."*

Red Herring. I-28 is asking Oregonians whether or not people who are already allowed to use, possess, transport, and cultivate cannabis for medical purposes should be provided a system of buying and selling cannabis. "Legalization" would ask whether all Oregonians 21 and older should be allowed to use, possess, transport, and possibly cultivate cannabis. The system of medical marijuana in Oregon is this: Suppose, and let's hope not, the editorial board of the Oregonian all returned from the doctor today. They all had just received the awful news that they have glioblastoma – a form of brain cancer.

Now our editorialists face the prospect of not just the cancer, but the chemotherapy treatments that can be so much worse. The enormous pain, the unending vomiting and dry heaves, the depression that comes with killing your body's cells on purpose, our editorialists are at the end of their rope. They can't swallow the pills and keep them down, the IV drugs have shut down their sphincters, what will they do? Fortunately, Oregon is one of the fourteen reasonable states that have allowed folks like our cancer-stricken editorialists to use cannabis, which is remarkable as an anti-emetic, helps with pain, and lightens up that depression.

Ah, but where to get it? For these editorialists, after getting their cards, have all the right in this state to grow some pot. But where do you get a seed or a start? Maybe you find the network of caring patients and activists who will give you a free plant and some medicine. But even then, it's going to take a while – many chemo treatments – before that plant is ready to harvest. That little bit of medicine you got as a donation won't last a day. And maybe after reading a few Oregonian editorials on the "medical marijuana charade", you're having trouble finding a grower or caregiver who wants to help you full time (unlikely; we're not cruel like that)?

What are you going to do, editorialists? Are you going to head downtown, looking for a dreadlocked kid or longhair, hoping to score in the illegal market? Or do you still have some friends from your Journo school days who can hook you up with a bag? I-28 would give all the 36,380 patients a place to get their medicine other than the park or "the guy". I'm surprised you felt the need to dance around that basic fact.

Russ Belville, NORML Outreach Coordinator

Visit > <http://stash.norml.org/> < for more.