



# COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

## STATE SENATE

July 11, 2013

United States Sentencing Commission  
One Columbus Circle NE, Suite 2-500  
South Lobby  
Washington, D.C. 20002-8002  
Attention: Public Affairs – Priorities Comment

To the members of the United States Sentencing Commission:

The United States' 40-year war on marijuana has sent millions of people to prison for use of a natural product, thus contributing to our country's status as the world's largest incarcerator and seriously eroding our civil liberties and civil rights while costing taxpayers billions of dollars a year.

And the penalties for marijuana -- including attorney fees, court costs, fines, criminal records, loss of employment and vastly diminished opportunity for future gainful employment, and jail time -- are often far more damaging than the use of the substance itself.

According to MPP, taxpayers spend nearly \$8 billion a year to hunt down, arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate marijuana consumers.

The money associated with the criminalization of marijuana could be used to assist low-income, elderly and disabled Americans. Furthermore, billions in potential taxes go to drug cartels and thousands of marijuana-related murders occur each year – all because of the prohibition of marijuana. Clearly, this act of prohibition is counterproductive.

It is clear that the present marijuana laws and policies cause more problems than they solve. The federal marijuana prohibition should be stricken from the books and replaced by reasonable regulations and restrictions. Federal sentences for marijuana possession, use and cultivation need to be reduced or diminished and the medicinal uses of marijuana should be removed from the purview of the government in their entirety.

Page 2  
July 11, 2013

The reasons already stated are enough to support the case for legalizing medical marijuana, but there are more. Not to be overlooked is that criminalizing marijuana lacks moral justification. How? A crime implies a victim, but who is that victim when the law makes responsible adult use of marijuana a crime?

This also raises the question of why the use of the drug marijuana is a criminal act, but not the use of alcohol or tobacco.

Prohibition has disallowed adequate research into the many known uses of Cannabis as medicine as attested to by US Patent # 6,630,507. If the use of marijuana can ease the pain, suffering and symptoms of life-changing illnesses and diseases, then why is that option being denied?

In the words of U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, a cosponsored of legislation to remove marijuana from the federal controlled substance list: "Criminally prosecuting adults for making the choice to smoke marijuana is a waste of law enforcement resources and an intrusion on personal freedom. I do not advocate urging people to smoke marijuana; neither do I urge them to drink alcoholic beverages or smoke tobacco; but in none of these cases do I think prohibition enforced by criminal sanctions is good public policy."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Perry B. Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Perry B. Clark  
State Senator