
Karen MacLean, Rules Coordinator
Board of Pharmacy
800 NE Oregon St., Suite 150
Portland, OR 97232

RE: Rescheduling of Cannabis

I am a 59 year old single father with 2 teenagers. A blue collar worker my entire adult life I've labored physically many years and have the injuries and accompanying aches and pains that go with such work over a lifetime.

In 1988 Drug Enforcement Administration administrative law judge Francis Young thoroughly studied cannabis and the law and one of the most profound conclusions the judge reached compelled him to say this:

"[Cannabis], in its natural form, is one of the safest therapeutically active substances known to man. By any measure of rational analysis marijuana can be safely used within a supervised routine of medical care." [1]

Indeed. As medical professionals you should know far better than I the relevancy of that statement to your task of reclassifying cannabis.

As an adult and as a cannabis consumer for 4 decades I will testify to the safety of cannabis. We know that it is literally impossible to OD on cannabis (there has never been an overdose with cannabis, ever!). The LD50 is estimated to be 20,000 to 40,000 times the amount in one marijuana cigarette (approximately 1500 lb) smoked in a period of 15 minutes (Annas, 1997) [2].

I must further point to the fact that the US Government has know since 1974 that cannabis has anti-cancer potential, yet chose to bury the results of the study demonstrating this important discovery.

"The term medical marijuana took on dramatic new meaning in February 2000, when researchers in Madrid announced they had destroyed incurable brain tumors in rats by injecting them with THC, the active ingredient in cannabis.

The Madrid study marks only the second time that THC has been administered to tumor-bearing animals. In 1974, researchers at the Medical College of Virginia, who had been funded by the National Institutes of Health to find evidence that marijuana damages the immune system, found instead that THC slowed the growth of three kinds of cancer in mice -- lung and breast cancer, and a virus-induced leukemia.

The DEA quickly shut down the Virginia study and all further cannabis/tumor research [...]"[3]

More important to me, as an adult, a responsible citizen and a father to two intelligent and healthy teenagers, is that the mere classification of a plant renders me a criminal for my gardening practices. The sanctity of the individual right to

privacy, guaranteed to us in our Constitution's Bill of Rights, is not to be lightly tampered with, and if so the reasoning behind any such tampering had best be of huge importance.

But... the classification of cannabis to schedule 1 is both ridiculous and fundamentally a lie. When cannabis became a banned substance the testimony presented to the US Congress was an outright sham. Following a racially vicious and bigoted media campaign (Hearst newspapers) playing to xenophobic tendencies prevalent at the time, we have laws (Prohibition) banning a plant that had been a mainstay in the human pharmacopeia for thousands of years.

These are examples of "marijuana facts" in the early 20th century:

- *"Was it marijuana, the new Mexican drug, that nerved the murderous arm of Clara Phillips when she hammered out her victim's life in Los Angeles?... THREE-FOURTHS OF THE CRIMES of violence in this country today are committed by DOPE SLAVES — that is a matter of cold record."*

- *"By the tons it is coming into this country — the deadly, dreadful poison that racks and tears not only the body, but the very heart and soul of every human being who once becomes a slave to it in any of its cruel and devastating forms.... Marihuana is a short cut to the insane asylum. Smoke marihuana cigarettes for a month and what was once your brain will be nothing but a storehouse of horrid specters. Hasheesh makes a murderer who kills for the love of killing out of the mildest mannered man who ever laughed at the idea that any habit could ever get him...."*

- *"There are 100,000 total marijuana smokers in the US, and most are Negroes, Hispanics, Filipinos, and entertainers. Their Satanic music, jazz, and swing, result from marijuana use. This marijuana causes white women to seek sexual relations with Negroes, entertainers, and any others."*

Really? This IS the testimony as presented in our nation's newspaper accounts of that era. See Pete Guither's excellent summary, Why is Marijuana Illegal?, here:

<http://www.drugwarrant.com/articles/why-is-marijuana-illegal/>

I have never suffered any injuries or health problems because of my cannabis consumption. On my father's side of my family we are prone to Alzheimer's. On my mother's side of the family we have arthritis. If I choose to use cannabis to possibly offset the onset of these diseases, that is MY decision. My health care is my responsibility, a responsibility that means for me if I choose to discuss or seek medical help that remains between me and my doctor/healthcare provider, not the government and especially not law enforcement.

Your decision as to which schedule to place cannabis should be medically and scientifically sound. It should also include the human factor, to rightness of policy and the factual correctness of the information determining scheduling.

While I have suffered no ill effects from cannabis the laws against it have cost me 2 jobs - the first because my employer was a nationally prominent hemp/cannabis activist and became a target for law enforcement and the second because of the unConstitutional practice of random drug tests.

What I do in the sanctity of my home is my business and my responsibility.

The Board of Pharmacy should listen closely to the patients and medical professionals whose opinions and knowledge of cannabis come from first hand experience. I have read law enforcement's 2009 testimony to the BoP... I can only shake my head in disgust as I compare their disdain to the quotes I have added above.

Reefer Madness is still alive and well and it is my most sincere hope that my respect for the professional pharmacists (who have rightly counseled me and answered my questions to them so well over these last 40 years) and their profession is legitimized by your doing the right thing.

My most sincere thanks for allowing me to add my voice,

Allan Erickson
29559 Clear Lake Rd
Eugene, OR 97402
541-285-3218
allan_e@efn.org

1 - OPINION AND RECOMMENDED RULING, FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DECISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE.

[available online, here:

<http://www.druglibrary.org/Schaffer/library/studies/young/young1.html>]

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Drug Enforcement Administration
In The Matter Of
MARIJUANA RESCHEDULING PETITION
Docket No. 86-22
OPINION AND RECOMMENDED RULING, FINDINGS OF
FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DECISION OF
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
FRANCIS L. YOUNG, Administrative Law Judge
DATED: SEPTEMBER 6, 1988

2 - Page 11 - Information for Health Care Professionals: Marihuana (Marijuana, Cannabis) Dried Plant for Administration by Ingestion or Other Means: Psychoactive Agent [Health Canada, 2003]

3 - Pot Shrinks Tumors; Government Knew In '74
Pubdate: Thu, 29 Mar 2001
Source: San Antonio Current (TX)
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(available online here: <http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v01/n572/a11.html>)