



NATIONAL NARCOTIC OFFICERS'
ASSOCIATIONS' COALITION



Smart Colorado

Colorado chapter

February 7, 2013

Hon. Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr.
US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Re: State Laws Legalizing Marijuana

Dear Attorney General Holder:

I am a former member of Congress, sponsor of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, and co-chair of Project SAM (Smart Approaches to Marijuana), joined by a diverse set of leaders in substance abuse policy representing the Colorado chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics' 600 physicians, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals' 33,126 members, Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America's 5,000 local drug prevention coalitions, National Narcotic Officers Association Coalition's 65,000 officers, and Smart Colorado, a broad-based alliance of concerned public health professionals in Colorado, who write to you with urgency regarding marijuana policy in this country.

We are writing to you to enforce the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) in Colorado and Washington with respect to recent ballot measures legalizing marijuana. These state laws would severely threaten public health and safety goals, expressly contradict the President's *National Drug Control Strategy*, make it impossible to comply with federal regulations, and present an obstacle to the achievement of Congress' discernible objectives to prohibit the use, sale, manufacture, and distribution of marijuana. We urge you to restate marijuana is illegal.

The Washington and Colorado state laws, authorizing retail and commercial sales of marijuana, marijuana smoking, marijuana possession, manufacturing and distribution, and the farming of industrial hemp, violate both the intent of Congress in enacting the CSA and the letter of the law.

The Department of Justice and Congress have determined through the CSA that marijuana is a Schedule I drug and as such growing, distributing, and possessing marijuana in *any* capacity, save a federal research program, is in “violation of federal law regardless of state laws permitting such activities.”

Marijuana remains a leading reason kids are in treatment today, and is a leading cause of car crashes among impaired individuals – surpassing alcohol in many states. Its abuse is directly linked to mental illness and IQ deterioration. The negative impacts of legalization of marijuana are substantial.

We advocate for an education-oriented strategy to prevent marijuana use, with focus on early intervention and treatment of addiction as a health issue. We also need to make sure those in recovery are not stigmatized for their addiction.

State laws legalizing marijuana would severely hamper our ability to act in the interest of public health. We urge you to swiftly and publicly declare these state laws illegal.

Thank you for your quick attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Kennedy
Project SAM (Smart Approaches to Marijuana)

American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado chapter
National Association of Drug Court Professionals
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
National Narcotics Officers Associations Coalition
Smart Colorado

cc:

Hon. R. Gil Kerlikowske, Director, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy
James Cole, Deputy Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice
Hon. Michele Leonhart, Administrator, Drug Enforcement Administration
Cecilia Muñoz, Director, White House Domestic Policy Council
Rumana Ahmed, White House Office of Public Engagement
United States Attorneys, Jenny Durkan and Michael Ormsby (Washington)
United States Attorney John Walsh (Colorado)
Office of the Vice President
Nora Volkow, Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse