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CITIZENS FOR A SENSIBLE SPOKANE REQUESTS PLEDGE FROM CANDIDATES AND COUNCIL
MEMBERS
Cannabis Policy Reform in Spokane, WA

Spokane's medical cannabis community sustained a series of almost fatal blows from the United States federal government earlier this Spring. Beginning on April 6, 2011, **U.S. Attorney Michael Ormsby notified local landlords and dispensary owners** to cease and desist or face possible federal prosecution. Many of the city's 30 or so dispensaries closed their doors independently. However, a few bold and compassionate providers remained open to patients in need.

On **April 28** and **May 18**, those still open were raided by a joint task force of local, state, and federal agencies, including the **U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration** and the **Spokane Police Department**. Finally, on July 20, **five area providers were indicted** on a list of federal charges and could face up to 20 years in prison. The aftermath of these events has forced Spokane's once thriving and open medical cannabis industry to move underground.

Meanwhile, **Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5073**, a bill revising Washington state's medical cannabis laws, was passed by the state legislature on April 22 and included provisions for state-licensed production, processing, and dispensing of medical cannabis. However, these provisions were vetoed on April 29 when **Governor Christine Gregoire** signed the bill into law, under the assertion that state employees may be subject to federal prosecution for participating in such a program. (**Governor's Veto Message**)

The surviving portions of SB 5073 went into effect on July 22 of this year, allowing for 10- patient, 45-plant **collective gardens** rather than retail-style dispensaries. They also include provisions clarifying the 'one-patient-at-one-time' loophole exploited by many store fronts, limiting designated providers to assisting one patient every 15 days.

Although Spokane's medical cannabis industry has been severely disabled by interference from Washington, D.C., and inaction out of Olympia, local patients and providers are slowly coming together to rebuild a community and create safe and responsible access for those in need.

On June 20, 2011, the Spokane City Council voted unanimously to **amend Spokane Municipal Code (SMC) Section 10.15.100** to include language accounting for recent changes made to Washington's medical cannabis laws, appearing to allow for collective gardens within city limits. However, the provision pertaining to medical cannabis is vague and does not stipulate whether collective owners are to obtain a business license, pay taxes, or are subject to other local laws such as zoning and land use codes. As a result, **providers are reluctant to openly assist patients**, leaving many without safe access to quality medicine.

It's important to note that **Section 1102 of SB 5073** provides that cities, towns and counties may adopt and enforce zoning requirements, business licensing requirements, health and safety requirements, and business taxes. Localities such as **Seattle** and **Ellensburg** have already passed ordinances allowing for and regulating medical cannabis production within city limits. Other rural and more conservative towns and counties have opted to place bans or moratoriums on collective gardens. As the largest and most populated municipality in the region, city officials in Spokane have a responsibility to provide clarity on this matter.

Citizens for a Sensible Spokane's **Medical Cannabis Product Regulations** ordinance provides a framework for local advocates and city officials to begin discussions. Modeled after an ordinance recently **passed unanimously by the Seattle City Council**, this measure would allow for safe access points to begin serving patients openly, without fear of reprisal, under conditions which are consistent with state law.

We are thus asking candidates running for council and mayor, as well as returning members of the council to sign the attached pledge clarifying their stance on local cannabis policy reform. The pledge provides various options for addressing issues surrounding marijuana within city limits, including the formation of a Cannabis Policy Oversight Committee and the possibility of making adult marijuana offenses the lowest police priority.

If you would like more information about this topic, or to schedule an appointment or interview, please contact Ian Moody at (509)217-6048 or e-mail ianm@sdpdirect.org

Copy of pledge sent to candidates and returning council members

Recipients: Mike Allen, David Condon, Mike Fagan, Dennis Hession, Joy Jones, Donna McKereghan, Nancy McLaughlin, Richard Rush, Steve Salvatori, Jon Snyder, Ben Stuckart, Mary Verner, Amber Waldref

PLEDGE – Local Cannabis Policy Reform

I _____, hereby pledge that if I am serving as Mayor or as a member of the Spokane City Council, I will act or vote to approve the creation of a Cannabis Policy Oversight Committee to discuss local policy proposals, synthesize research, and make specific policy recommendations to the Spokane City Council. I will support such a committee's recommended regulations at the city level, protecting safe access to medical cannabis for qualifying patients. Finally, as a matter of conserving the Spokane Police Department's scarce resources, I will support a lowest-priority police enforcement policy for adult marijuana offenses in the city of Spokane.

Or

I _____, will not support local cannabis policy reform.

COMMENTS:

Please print this pledge and return it it with your position and comments as soon as possible to:

Citizens for a Sensible Spokane
c/o Ian Moody
2212 E. Wellesley Ave.
Spokane, WA 99207

or

Send us a quick reply with your position to ianm@sdpdirect.org

Thank you for your time.

Citizens for a Sensible Spokane