

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

February 12, 2014

Dear Mr. President:

We were encouraged by your recent comments in your interview with David Remnick in the January 27, 2014 issue of the New Yorker, about the shifting public opinion on the legalization of marijuana. We request that you take action to help alleviate the harms to society caused by the federal Schedule I classification of marijuana.

Lives and resources are wasted on enforcing harsh, unrealistic, and unfair marijuana laws. Nearly two-thirds of a million people every year are arrested for marijuana possession. We spend billions every year enforcing marijuana laws, which disproportionately impact minorities. According to the ACLU, black Americans are nearly four times more likely than whites to be arrested for marijuana possession, despite comparable marijuana usage rates.

You said that you don't believe marijuana is any more dangerous than alcohol: a fully legalized substance, and believe it to be less dangerous "in terms of its impact on the individual consumer." This is true. Marijuana, however, remains listed in the federal Controlled Substances Act at Schedule I, the strictest classification, along with heroin and LSD. This is a higher listing than cocaine and methamphetamine, Schedule II substances that you gave as examples of harder drugs. This makes no sense.

Classifying marijuana as Schedule I at the federal level perpetuates an unjust and irrational system. Schedule I recognizes no medical use, disregarding both medical evidence and the laws of nearly half of the states that have legalized medical marijuana. A Schedule I or II classification also means that marijuana businesses in states where adult or medical use are legal cannot deduct business expenses from their taxes or take tax credits due to Section 280E of the federal tax code.

We request that you instruct Attorney General Holder to delist or classify marijuana in a more appropriate way, at the very least eliminating it from Schedule I or II. Furthermore, one would hope that that your Administration officials publicly reflect your views on this matter. Statements such as the one from DEA chief of operations James L.

Capra that the legalization of marijuana at the state level is “reckless and irresponsible”¹ serve no purposes other than to inflame passions and misinform the public.

Thank you for your continued thoughtfulness about this important issue. We believe the current system wastes resources and destroys lives, in turn damaging families and communities. Taking action on this issue is long overdue.

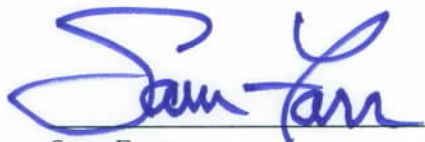
Sincerely,



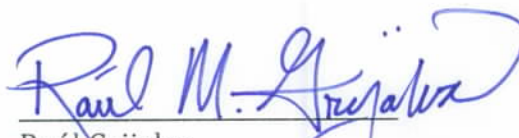
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
Member of Congress



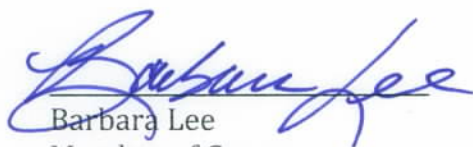
Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress



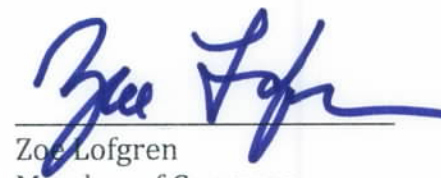
Mike Honda
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



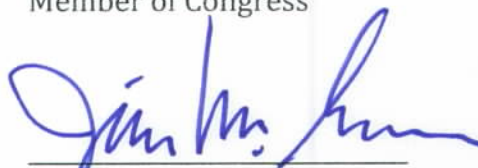
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

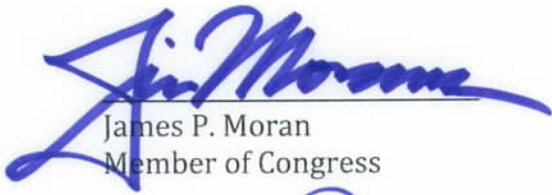



Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress



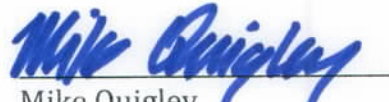
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress


¹ http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/dea-operations-chief-decries-legalization-of-marijuana-at-state-level/2014/01/15/17af548a-7e38-11e3-9556-4a4bf7bcbd84_story.html

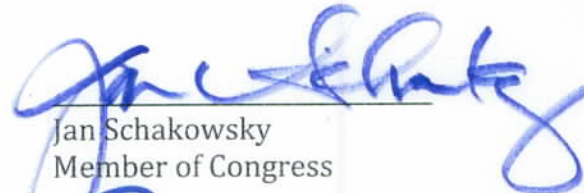

James P. Moran
Member of Congress


Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress

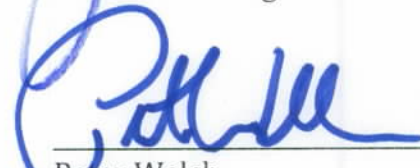

Jared Polis
Member of Congress


Mike Quigley
Member of Congress


Dana Rohrabacher
Member of Congress


Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress


Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress


Peter Welch
Member of Congress