



"Industrial Hemp Farming Act" Reintroduced In U.S. Congress

February 15, 2007 - Washington, DC, USA: Congressman Ron Paul (R-TX), along with nine Democrat co-sponsors, reintroduced legislation in Congress this week to authorize the state-sanctioned cultivation of industrial hemp for commercial purposes. Hemp is a distinct variety of the plant species cannabis sativa that contains only minute (less than 1%) amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the primary psychoactive compound in marijuana.

House Bill 1009, the Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2007, seeks to amend the federal Controlled Substances Act so that cannabis containing only trace amounts of THC is no longer defined as "marihuana" [sic] under the statute. The act grants states the "exclusive authority" to license and regulate the commercial production of industrial hemp.

Currently, several US states have laws authorizing hemp production by licensed cultivators. However, farmers in these states may not produce hemp without federal permission.

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More Campuses Moving Forward With Marijuana-Alcohol "Equalization" Legislation

February 8, 2007 - Washington, DC, USA: Legislation that seeks to reduce campus marijuana possession penalties so that they are no greater than university-imposed sanctions for alcohol was approved by George Washington University's Student Association Senate this week.

The proposal, which was sponsored by the GWU chapter of NORML, must still be approved by the SA president and the GWU Board of Trustees before it can be enacted.

Under current campus policy, a marijuana possession violation results in at a minimum expulsion from student housing. Students do not face similar sanctions for violating campus alcohol policy until at least their third offense. GW NORML's proposal requests the university to treat pot-related disciplinary matters in a manner similar to alcohol violations.

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DEA Administrative Law Judge Rules Against US Government's Monopoly On Pot Production

February 12, 2007 - Washington, DC, USA: Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Administrative Law Judge Mary Ellen Bittner ruled Monday that the private production of cannabis for research purposes is "in the public interest." Her ruling affirms that the DEA in 2004 improperly rejected an application from the University of Massachusetts (UMass) at Amherst to manufacture cannabis for FDA-approved research.

Bittner opined: "I conclude that granting Respondent's application would not be inconsistent with the Single Convention, that there would be minimal risk of diversion of marijuana resulting from Respondent's registration, that there is currently an inadequate supply of marijuana available for research purposes, that competition in the provision of marijuana for such purposes is inadequate, and that Respondent.

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The Willamette Valley NORML News Report

is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit project to record and broadcast news, announcements and information about cannabis law reform.

The W-V-NORML News Report is produced by the Eugene, OREGON chapter of NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

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Check 'em out on-line! *visit:*

WillametteValleyNORML.org

A Voice for Responsible Marijuana Smokers

Since its founding in 1970, NORML has provided a voice in the public policy debate for those Americans who oppose marijuana prohibition and favor an end to the practice of arresting marijuana smokers. A nonprofit public-interest advocacy group, NORML represents the interests of the tens of millions of Americans who smoke marijuana responsibly. During the 1970s, NORML led the successful efforts to decriminalize minor marijuana offenses in 11 states and significantly lower marijuana penalties in all others.

The oldest and largest marijuana legalization organization in the country, NORML maintains a professional staff in Washington, DC, and a network of volunteer state and local [NORML Chapters](#) across the country. Check 'em out, and find the one nearest you!

The NORML mission is to move public opinion sufficiently to achieve the repeal of marijuana prohibition so that the responsible use of cannabis by adults is no longer subject to penalty.

When marijuana is enjoyed responsibly, subjecting users to harsh criminal and civil penalties provides no public benefit and causes terrible injustices. For reasons of public safety, public health, economics and justice, the prohibition laws should be repealed to the extent that they criminalize responsible marijuana use. **NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws – is located at 1600 K Street, NW, Suite 501, Washington, DC 20006-2832. Phone (202) 483-5500, Fax: (202) 483-0057 or visit: www.norml.org**

Today Willamette Valley NORML joins the fight to reform state and federal marijuana laws, whether by voter initiative or through the elected legislatures. W-V-NORML will serve as an informational resource to media on marijuana-related stories, providing a perspective to offset the [anti-marijuana propaganda](#) from the government; lobby state and federal legislators in support of reform legislation; publish a regular [newsletter](#); host an informative web site; and serve as the umbrella group for a regional network of citizen-activists committed to ending marijuana prohibition and legalizing marijuana.

Along with their parent organization, W-V-NORML will sponsor public advertising campaigns to better educate the public about marijuana and alternatives to current marijuana policy; provide legal assistance and support to victims of the current laws; and promote relevant research.

W-V-NORML supports the right of adults to use marijuana responsibly, whether for [medical](#) or [personal](#) purposes. All penalties, both civil and criminal, should be eliminated for responsible use. W-V-NORML also advocates the legalization of [hemp](#) (non-psychoactive marijuana) for industrial use. **To find out more, like how you can help, call, write or visit our website. You'll be glad you did!**

<continued from **HEMP ACT, page 1** > According to a 2005 Congressional Research Service (CRS) report, "The DEA has been unwilling to grant licenses for growing small plots of hemp for research purposes," even when such research is authorized by state law, because the agency believes that doing so would "send the wrong message to the American public concerning the government's position on drugs."

Passage of HR 1009 would remove this federal barrier and defer exclusive regulatory authority over hemp production to state statutes.

"It is indefensible that the United States government prevents American farmers from growing this crop," Congressman Paul said. "By passing the Industrial Hemp Farming Act the House of Representatives can help American farmers and reduce the trade deficit all without spending a single taxpayer dollar."

According to the CRS, "The United States is the only developed nation in which industrial hemp is not an established crop." Farmers in Canada and the European Union grow hemp commercially for fiber, seed, and oil for use in a variety of industrial and consumer products, including food. Hemp fiber and hemp-based products may be legally imported to the United States in compliance with several economic treaties, including NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). *For more information, please visit:*
<http://www.votehemp.com/federal.html> or
http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=3377

<continued from **CAMPUSES MOVING FORWARD, page 1** > GW NORML obtained 100 student signatures in favor of the proposal to place their resolution before the senate.

Similar equalization proposals have been passed via student initiative at the University of Maryland, Florida State University, and at the University of Texas at Austin. However, school administrators have yet to implement those measures.

Student government at Virginia Tech will also debate the merits of similar legislation this spring. Under current policy, students found in possession of cannabis may be suspended from attending the university.

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, or Erin Dame, NORML Outreach Coordinator, at (202) 483-5500. To listen to an interview with GW NORML President Greg Hersh on NORML's Daily AudioStash, visit:
http://www.norml.org/audio/audio_stash/NORML_Daily_AudioStash_02_07_2007.mp3

<continued from **DEA JUDGE RULES, page 1** > has complied with applicable laws and has never been convicted of any violation of any law pertaining to controlled substances. I therefore find that Respondent's registration to cultivate marijuana would be in the public interest."

Currently, all federally approved research on marijuana must utilize cannabis supplied by and grown under contract with the US National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). The UMass-Amherst proposal sought to provide clinical investigators with an alternative, independent source of cannabis for FDA-approved clinical trials.

NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre praised the decision. "Judge Bittner's ruling is an important first step toward breaking the US government's long-standing monopoly regarding the cultivation of research-grade cannabis. Clinical investigators and drug development researchers who no longer wish to conduct trials using NIDA's inferior strains of cannabis may one day have access to other, legal alternatives."

In recent years, several US researchers have criticized NIDA's unwillingness to provide cannabis for clinical protocols seeking to investigate the drug's medical uses. In 2004, the agency's director Nora Volkow stated that it is "not NIDA's mission to study the medical uses of marijuana."

NORML Board Member Rick Doblin -- Executive Director of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) -- one of the respondents in the case, said: "This is a major step to getting us to do the scientific research that the government has been blocking for the past 30 years. If the government says no [to the judge's ruling,] the hypocrisy of their approach will help fuel efforts for [additional] state medical marijuana reforms."

The DEA has 20 days to challenge Judge Bittner's decision. The decision then goes before DEA Deputy Administrator Michele Leonhart, who can still elect to set aside the ruling. A spokesman for the agency told the Associated Press that they are reviewing the opinion.

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, or Paul Armentano, Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500. Text of Judge Bittner's ruling is available online at: <http://www.maps.org/ALJfindings.PDF>. Additional information is available on today's edition of NORML's daily AudioStash at: <http://www.normlaudiostash.com>

White House Requests Increased Funding For Student Drug Testing, Anti-Pot Ads

February 8, 2007 - Washington, DC, USA: The Bush administration has requested significant increases in federal funding to randomly drug test student athletes and pay for public service announcements (PSAs) urging teens to avoid marijuana.

According to budget requests, the White House is demanding \$130 million in 2008 to fund the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, an increase of 31 percent over current funding levels. Studies of the campaign, which has spent over \$2 billion in federal monies and matching funds since its inception in 1998, have consistently found that teens most exposed to the advertisements are more likely to try pot than their peers.

"It appears that ... anti-marijuana public statement announcements used in national anti-drug campaigns in the US produce immediate effects [that are the] opposite [of those] intended by the creators of the campaign," Texas State University investigators reported last year in the journal *Addictive Behaviors*.

White House officials have also requested \$17.9 million dollars in 2008 to pay for the implementation of random drug testing programs for students who participate in competitive extra-curricular activities.

Since 2005, the Education Department has appropriated more than \$20 million to various school districts to pay for random drug testing programs. Federal grant funds may not be used to pay for separate drug education and/or prevention curricula, nor may any funds be used to train school staff officials on how to implement drug testing. Only federal investigators are eligible to review data collected by the school programs, which will be evaluated as part of a forthcoming federal assessment of the efficacy of random drug testing to deter illicit student drug use.

A previous evaluation of student drug testing programs conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation concluded, "Drug testing, as practiced in recent years in American secondary schools, does not prevent or inhibit student drug use." Investigators collected data from 894 schools and 94,000 students and found that at every grade level studied -- 8, 10, and 12 -- students reported using illicit drugs at virtually identical rates in schools that drug tested versus those that did not.

To date, an estimated five percent of schools randomly drug test student athletes, and only two percent of schools test students who participate in extra-curricular activities other than athletics. As a result, the White House is sponsoring a series of regional summits this spring to encourage middle school and high school administrators to implement federally sponsored drug testing. The 2007 summits are scheduled to take place in Newark, New Jersey (February 27), Honolulu, Hawaii (March 27), and Las Vegas, Nevada (April 24).

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500.

NORML Teams With Leading Corporate Software Maker To Draft First-Ever 'Enlightened' Employee Marijuana Policy

February 1, 2007 - Washington, DC, USA: NORML and business software designer JIAN have partnered together to draft corporate guidelines recommending employers treat workers' off-the-clock cannabis use in a manner similar to alcohol. The policy will be included in the forthcoming edition of JIAN's "Employee Manual Builder," a popular, commercially available software program designed for corporate Human Resource (HR) managers.

The suggested employee guidelines discourage employers from implementing random and/or "pre-accident" urine screening for cannabis, noting that the test is not suitable for detecting employee impairment or determining recent drug use.

"The company understands that there is a difference between 'substance use' and 'substance abuse,' and that 'use' isn't necessarily 'abuse,'" the guidelines state. "Employees are free to make their own lifestyle choices when not in the workplace or otherwise on company time. However, such choices must not be allowed to interfere with job performance."

They add: "Among the reported 75 million Americans over age 26 who report having used cannabis, more than 70 percent are employed full-time. ... Overall, however, there exists little evidence that cannabis use is associated with lower productivity and/or elevated health costs among full-time employees. Like alcohol, moderate use of cannabis by employees during non-work hours should be of little concern for most employers."

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<continued from previous page> The guidelines affirm that employees who report for work under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants, including cannabis, may be sanctioned and/or subject to varieties of performance and/or "post accident" testing.

NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre said that the guidelines are science-based and appropriately reflect the prevalence and relative safety of marijuana use among working-age Americans.

"In the past few years, more and more companies large and small have contacted NORML wishing to implement a more tolerant and enlightened workplace drug policy, especially for those employees who may use cannabis off-the-clock for medicinal or recreational purposes," he said. "Targeting and punishing responsible employees who choose to use cannabis in their off-hours is a poor use of company resources. Moreover, this policy is arbitrary, discriminatory, and inherently unfair in an American workforce replete with alcohol, tobacco, and pharmaceutical consumers."

Full text of NORML's model employee guidelines are available on NORML's website at: http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=7160. For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, or Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500.

Cannabis Poses Less On-Road Risk Than Alcohol, US Crash Data Says

February 22, 2007 - Thunder Bay, Ontario: US drivers involved in fatal crashes who had trace levels of cannabis in their blood or urine are less likely to have engaged in risky driving behavior than drivers who test positive for low levels of alcohol, according to case-control data published in the current issue of the *Canadian Journal of Public Health*.

Investigators at Ontario's Lakeland University, Public Health Program, reviewed drug and alcohol data from US drivers aged 20-49 who were involved in a fatal crash from 1993 to 2003. Researchers separated motorists into 'cases' (drivers who had at least one potentially unsafe driving action recorded in relation to the crash) and 'controls' (drivers who had no such driving action recorded). Investigators sought to determine whether drivers who tested positive for cannabis but negative for alcohol were more likely to have engaged in risky driving behavior than drivers who tested negative for both pot and alcohol. Over the ten-year period, 1,647 drivers tested negative for alcohol, but tested

positive for the presence of THC in their blood or urine.

Researchers concluded that alcohol-free drivers who tested positive for cannabis had a slightly elevated risk of engaging in a potentially unsafe action compared to sober drivers, even after controlling for age, sex, and prior driving record. However, investigators also reported that drivers who tested positive for low levels of alcohol (.05 BAC) possessed a significantly greater risk of engaging in such risky driving behaviors compared to sober drivers.

Investigators wrote: "The findings point to cannabis as a potential risk factor in fatal crashes. Individuals who tested positive for cannabis but negative for alcohol had a 29 percent excess risk of having driven in a fashion that may have contributed to the crash, compared to drivers who tested negative for cannabis. ... Yet these estimates appear small compared to alcohol and some prescription medications."

Motorists who had BAC of .05 percent, a threshold well below the legal limit for drunk driving in the US, had a 101 percent excessive risk of having driven in a risky manner compared to alcohol-free drivers, authors reported. Drivers with a BAC of .10, just over the US legal limit for drunk driving, had a 200 percent excess risk.

Canadian researchers also determined that motorists who tested positive for cannabis were generally younger, male, and had a poorer driving record in the prior three years than drivers who tested negative for pot.

Responding to the study, California NORML Coordinator Dale Gieringer said: "This is the latest in a long line of studies to show that marijuana is a lesser on-road accident hazard than alcohol. Yet, ironically, federal drug policy has been more geared toward exaggerating the minor on-road risks posed by cannabis and downplaying the known risks posed by alcohol."

An analysis of French crash data published in the *British Journal of Medicine* in 2005 similarly reported that drivers who tested positive for cannabis in the blood were far less likely to have been involved in a fatal traffic fatality than drivers who possessed BAC levels of .05-.08.

According to previous studies of on-road crash data, past use of cannabis (as indicated by the presence of marijuana metabolites in the urine) is not associated with an elevated risk of accident. By

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<continued from previous page> contrast, drivers who test positive for THC in the blood above 5 ng/ml (indicating recent use of pot) are typically associated with an elevated risk of accident compared to drivers who test negative for cannabis and/or test positive for very low levels of THC in the blood.

THC blood levels typically fall below 5 ng/ml in recreational (non-chronic) cannabis users within 60 to 120 minutes after inhalation.

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500 or Dale Gieringer, California NORML Coordinator, at (415) 563-5858. Full text of the study, "The impact of cannabis on driving," appears in the January/February issue of the Canadian Journal of Public Health.

Marijuana Use Prevalent Among Sickle Cell Patients

February 1, 2007 - Kingston, Jamaica: Marijuana smoking is far more prevalent among Jamaicans suffering from sickle cell disease (SCD) than among the general population, according to survey data published in the current issue of the *West Indian Medical Journal*.

Investigators at the University of the West Indies in Kingston surveyed the cannabis smoking habits of 145 men and women with SCD. Researchers questioned patients' use patterns in 2000 and then conducted a follow up survey in 2004.

Among those surveyed in 2004, 19 percent of women and 65 percent of men with SCD reported smoking cannabis. By contrast, among the Jamaican population, only ten percent of women and 37 percent of men report having ever smoked marijuana.

Though Jamaicans with SCD used cannabis in greater numbers, authors did not attribute this increase exclusively to symptom management noting that only six percent of those surveyed associated their usage with combating the disease. "There was no suggestion that smokers and non-smokers had different pain profiles ... [and] there was little difference between smokers and non-smokers in the median number of pain events," authors concluded.

Investigators did not assess whether there existed a possible link between the frequency of cannabis use and the amelioration of SCD complications among those surveyed.

Anecdotal reports of SCD patients using cannabis therapeutically have been noted in the scientific literature. Most recently, a study published in the

British Journal of Haematology found that 36 percent of SCD patients reported having used cannabis in the past 12 months to relieve symptoms of the disease including pain, anxiety, and depression.

Sickle cell disease is a chronic condition that targets the body's red blood cells and is characterized by episodic pain in the joints, fever, leg ulcers, and jaundice, among other symptoms. In the United States, SCD affects about one in 650 African Americans and about half as many Latin Americans.

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the study, "The prevalence of marijuana smoking in young adults with sickle cell disease: a longitudinal study," appears in the West Indian Medical Journal.

New Mexico Senate Overwhelmingly Approves Medical Marijuana Measure

February 8, 2007 - Santa Fe, NM, USA: Legislation seeking to establish statewide regulations permitting qualified patients to use medicinal cannabis was approved 34 to 7 by the Senate yesterday, and now moves to the House for consideration.

Prior versions of the bill, known as the Lynn and Erin Compassionate Use Act (SB 238), have previously passed both legislative chambers, but fell just short of becoming law. If enacted, the measure would order the state Department of Health to promulgate rules governing the use and distribution of medical cannabis to state-authorized patients.

Supporters of the bill include New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson (D), who stated yesterday: "I continue to support a medical marijuana bill that includes proper safeguards to prevent abuse. I will work with legislators to get it passed this session to provide this option for New Mexicans suffering from debilitating diseases."

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500 or visit: <http://www.drugpolicyalliance.org>. Additional information on SB 238 is available from NORML's "Take Action" center at: <http://capwiz.com/norml2/issues/alert/?alertid=9327106&type=ML>. To listen to an interview with DPA New Mexico's Reena Szczperanski on NORML's Daily AudioStash, visit: http://www.norml.org/audio/audio_stash/NORML_Daily_AudioStash_02_06_2007.mp3

Inhaled Cannabis Significantly Reduces HIV-Associated Neuropathy

February 12, 2007 - San Francisco, CA, USA:

Cannabis significantly reduces HIV-associated neuropathic pain compared to placebo, and possesses an acceptable margin of safety for use, according to clinical trial data to be published in the journal *Neurology*.

Investigators at San Francisco General Hospital and the University of California's Pain Clinical Research Center assessed the efficacy of inhaled cannabis on HIV-associated sensory neuropathy in 50 volunteers participating in a five-day double-blind, placebo-controlled trial. Researchers reported that smoking low-grade cannabis (3.56 percent THC) three times daily reduced patients' pain by 34 percent.

"Thirteen of 25 patients randomized to cannabis cigarettes had >30 percent reduction in pain from baseline to end of treatment versus 6 of 25 patients receiving placebo cigarettes," authors wrote. A 30 percent reduction in pain is considered to be a clinically significant amount of pain relief.

Investigators added: "Smoking the first cannabis cigarette reduced chronic pain ratings by a median of 72 percent versus a reduction of 15 percent with placebo [zero THC] cigarettes. On day five, just prior to smoking the last cigarette, median ratings of current chronic pain intensity were lower in the cannabis group than in the placebo group. Smoking the last cigarette further reduced chronic pain ratings 51 percent in the cannabis group versus five percent in the placebo group."

They concluded: "Smoked cannabis was well tolerated and effectively relieved chronic neuropathic pain from HIV-associated neuropathy [in a manner] similar to oral drugs used for chronic neuropathic pain."

The lead investigator of the study, Donald Abrams of San Francisco General Hospital, initially sought federal approval to assess the potential medical efficacy of cannabis in HIV patients in 1994, but was repeatedly denied access to the US government's supply of research-grade marijuana. Today's study is one of the first US-led clinical trials evaluating the efficacy of smoked cannabis to take place in nearly two decades.

The University of California's Center for Medicinal Cannabis Research sponsored the trial.

Previous clinical trials assessing the use of cannabinoids as analgesics have demonstrated that they can significantly reduce the neuropathy associated with multiple sclerosis, diabetes, cancer, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Neuropathic pain affects an estimated one percent of the world's population and is typically unresponsive to both opioids and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen.

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500, or California NORML Coordinator Dale Gieringer at (415) 563-5858. Full text of the study, "Cannabis in painful HIV-associated sensory neuropathy," appears in the forthcoming issue of Neurology. Additional information about the study is available at: <http://www.cmcr.ucsd.edu> and on today's edition of NORML's daily AudioStash at: <http://www.normlaudiostash.com>.

Minor Respiratory Complications, No Decrease In Pulmonary Function Associated With Long-Term Marijuana Smoking, Study Says

February 15, 2007 - West Haven, CT, USA:

Long-term smoking of cannabis is associated with an elevated risk of respiratory complications, including an increase in cough, sputum production, and wheezing, but not a decline in pulmonary function, according to a review published in the February issue of the journal *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

Investigators at the Yale University School of Medicine conducted a systematic review of studies published between 1966 and 2005 that assessed the effects of marijuana smoking on pulmonary function and respiratory complications.

The data failed to show an association between long-term marijuana smoking and airflow obstruction (emphysema), as measured by airway hyperreactivity, forced expiratory volume (FEV), and other measures, investigators reported. Short-term use of cannabis was associated with bronchodilation.

Investigators did find that long-term marijuana smoking was associated with an increased risk of certain respiratory complications -- including cough, bronchitis, phlegm, and wheezing. Most of these complications persisted even after researchers adjusted for tobacco smoking.

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News From *your* local affiliate of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

<continued from previous page> Previous reviews of long-term cannabis smoking have noted similar respiratory complications, though an association between cannabis use and lung and/or upper aerodigestive tract (UAT) cancers has not been found.

Authors suggested that cannabis inhalation via specialized delivery systems such as vaporizers would likely yield different results.

Cannabis vaporization limits users' intake of respiratory toxins by heating cannabis to a temperature where cannabinoid vapors form (typically around 180-190 degrees Celsius), but below the point of combustion where noxious smoke and associated toxins (e.g., carcinogenic hydrocarbons) are produced (near 230 degrees Celsius). According to clinical trial data published last year in the *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences*, vaporization is a "safe and effective" cannabinoid delivery system for individuals desiring the rapid onset associated with inhalation, but who wish to avoid the respiratory risks of smoking.

"The final pulmonic uptake of THC is comparable to the smoking of cannabis, while avoiding the respiratory disadvantages of smoking," investigators in that study reported.

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Senior Policy Analyst, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the study, "Effects of marijuana smoking on pulmonary functions and respiratory complications: a systemic review" appears in the current issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine.

City Shelves Proposed Pot Penalties after Judge Resigns Rather Than Impose New Pot Penalties

February 22, 2007 - Lafayette, CO, USA: Lafayette City Council members have abruptly

withdrawn a proposed ordinance that sought to significantly increase municipal penalties for minor marijuana possession.

Council members shelved the proposal late last week following the resignation of Lafayette Municipal Court Associate Judge Lenny Frieling, who stepped down to protest the measure.

Judge Frieling resigned from the bench after eight years following the city council's interim approval of an ordinance to make minor marijuana possession offenses punishable by a \$1,000 fine and up to one year in jail. Under Colorado law, minor pot violations are punishable by a \$100 fine and no jail time.

Frieling, lifetime member of NORML and serves on the organization's legal committee, told the Council in his resignation letter -

"Since you have seen fit to increase the penalty for cannabis possession, ... I find that I am morally and ethically unable to sit as a judge for the city".

As proposed, Ordinance No. 6 would have made minor marijuana possession offenses punishable by a \$1,000 fine and up to one year in jail. Under Colorado law, minor pot violations are punishable by a \$100 fine and no jail time.

The City Council was to have affirmed the ordinance this week. Council members instead elected to hold a public workshop on the measure in April.

Last November, a majority of Lafayette voters decided in favor of Amendment 44, which sought to remove all criminal penalties on the possession of one ounce of cannabis. *For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500. An interview with Attorney Lenny Frieling is available on the February 20, 2007 edition of the NORML Daily AudioStash.*

