



# **American Medical Association Calls For Scientific Review Of Marijuana's Prohibitive Status**

**Houston, TX, USA:** The American Medical Association (AMA) this week called for a scientific review of cannabis' federal status as a Schedule I prohibited substance.

On Tuesday, the AMA's House of Delegates resolved, "[The] AMA urges that marijuana's status as a federal Schedule I controlled substance be reviewed with the goal of facilitating the conduct of clinical research and development of cannabinoid-based medicines."

The AMA's resolution amends the organization's previously held position that "marijuana be retained in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act" of the United States.

Under federal law, all Schedule I classified substances are defined as possessing "no currently accepted use in treatment in the United States." Congress classified marijuana, and all

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## **Oregon: State NORML Affiliate Opens First 'Cannabis Café'**

**Portland, OR, USA:** Oregon NORML, a state affiliate of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), on Friday opened the state's first café catering to state-authorized medical marijuana patients. Over 250 people attended the café's grand opening, which received international media coverage from the Associated Press, *Reuters News Wire*, and the *New York Times*.

Patrons of the café, who must be in good standing with the state's medical marijuana program as well as a member of Oregon NORML, may consume cannabis on the premises.

Unlike conventional marijuana dispensaries that operate in states like California and Colorado, medical cannabis is

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## **"Truth In Trials Act" Reintroduced In Congress**

**Washington, DC, USA:** California Democrat Sam Farr, along with a bipartisan coalition of 27 co-sponsors, has reintroduced legislation to protect state-authorized medical cannabis patients and their providers from federal prosecution.

House Bill 3939: the Truth in Trials Act of 2009 would provide an affirmative defense in federal court for defendants whose actions were in compliance with the medical marijuana laws of their state.

Passage of House Bill 3939 would codify legal protections for defendants caught between state and federal laws, ensuring that they can cite state law as a legal defense in federal trials.

It states: "Any person facing prosecution or a proceeding for

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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

----- Making contact -----

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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](http://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 AMA, page 1 > of the plants naturally occurring compounds (known as cannabinoids) as a Schedule I substance upon passage of the Controlled Substances Act in 1970.

In a 1988 administrative ruling, US Drug Enforcement Administrative Law Judge Francis Young determined, "By any measure of rational analysis, marijuana can be safely used within a supervised routine of medical care," and recommended that the drug be rescheduled under federal law. Young's decision was eventually rejected by the DEA in 1990.

Presently the DEA website, "Exposing the Myths of Smoked Medical Marijuana," still states, "The American Medical Association recommends that marijuana remain a Schedule I controlled substance."

In 2008 the American College of Physicians also called for a reclassification of cannabis' Schedule I status. In recent years, numerous prominent health organizations, including the American Nurses Association and the American Public Health Association, have called for the immediate legalization of marijuana for medical purposes.

In a separate action, the AMA also adopted a report drafted by its Council on Science and Public Health stating, "Results of short term controlled trials indicate that smoked cannabis reduces neuropathic pain, improves appetite and caloric intake especially in patients with reduced muscle mass, and may relieve spasticity and pain in patients with multiple sclerosis."

This conclusion contradicts a recent White House fact-sheet, entitled "Medical Marijuana Reality Check," which alleges, "no sound scientific studies have supported medical use of smoked marijuana for treatment in the United States, and no animal or human data support the safety or efficacy of smoked marijuana for general medical use."

Commenting on the AMA's policy reversal NORML Deputy Director Paul Armentano said: "This week the American Medical Association abandoned its long-standing 'flat-Earth' policy

regarding the safety and efficacy of cannabis as a therapeutic agent. The AMA's resolution calls on science, not ideological rhetoric, to guide our nation's marijuana policies – a position that NORML has advocated since our inception."

*For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500 or Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org.*

<continued from CAFE, page 1 > not sold on the premises, nor is the primary function of the café to dispense marijuana. "This is not a medical marijuana dispensary with a café; this is a café for medical marijuana patients," said Madeline Martinez, Oregon NORML Executive Director and a member of NORML's Board of Directors.

Presently, over 24,000 Oregonians are authorized by the state Department of Health to use cannabis medicinally. *For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500, or Madeline Martinez, Oregon NORML Executive Director, at (503) 239-6110.*

<continued from ACT RE-INTRODUCED, page 1 > any marijuana-related offense under any Federal law shall have the right to introduce evidence demonstrating that the marijuana-related activities for which the person stands accused were performed in compliance with State law regarding the medical use of marijuana."

Said Farr: "This is a common sense bill that will help stop the waste of law enforcement and judicial resources that have been spent prosecuting individuals who are following state laws. This legislation is about fair treatment of defendants in medical marijuana trials, plain and simple."

Last month United States Deputy Attorney General David Ogden issued a memorandum to federal prosecutors directing them to not "focus federal resources ... on individuals whose actions are in clear and unambiguous compliance with existing state laws providing

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for the medical use of marijuana." Previous versions of the Truth in Trials Act were introduced in both the 108th and 109th Congress, but failed to receive a public hearing or a committee vote.

In June, Massachusetts Democrat Barney Frank reintroduced legislation – HR 2835: The Medical Marijuana Patient Protection Act of 2009 – authorizing the state-authorized use of medical marijuana. That bill remains pending before the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

*For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500. Additional information about the Medical Marijuana Patient Protection Act of 2009 is available at NORML's Take Action Center at: <http://capwiz.com/norml2/issues/alert/?alertid=14288611>.*

## **Marijuana Use Associated With 'Improved Neurocognition' In Bipolar Patients, Study Says**

**Oslo, Norway:** Cannabis use is associated with "improved neurocognition" in subjects diagnosed with bipolar disorder, according to clinical trial data published online by the journal *Psychological Medicine*.

Investigators at Norway's University of Oslo, Institute of Psychiatry investigated the association between cannabis use and neurocognition in 133 patients with bipolar disorder. Researchers reported that subjects who used cannabis performed better than non-users on a series of neurocognitive tests. Authors determined that marijuana use was associated with "statistically significant" improvement in attention, executive function, verbal fluency, logistical memory-learning, and logical memory-recall.

Researchers reported that contrasting results were associated with the use of marijuana among subjects diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Investigators concluded, "The findings suggest that cannabis use may be related to improved neurocognition in bipolar disorder and

compromised neurocognition in schizophrenia."

The findings conflict with those of a 2007 study published in the journal *Progress in Neuro-Psychopharmacology & Biology Psychiatry* that reported that cannabis use was *not* associated with a decline in cognitive function in schizophrenic patients, and might even improve it. *For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: [paul@norml.org](mailto:paul@norml.org).*

## **California Medical Association Says Pot Prohibition Is A "Failed Public Health Policy"**

**Sacramento, CA, USA:** Members of the California Medical Association's (CMA) House of Delegates have endorsed a resolution stating that the criminal prohibition of marijuana is a "failed public health policy."

As enacted, Resolution 704a-09, the "Criminalization of Marijuana" states: "[The] CMA considers the criminalization of marijuana to be a failed public health policy, ... and encourage[s] ... debate and education regarding the health aspects of changing current policy regarding cannabis use."

The newly adopted CMA resolution coincides with the scheduling of legislative hearings regarding Assembly Bill 390, the Marijuana Control, Regulation, and Education Act, which seeks to tax and regulate the commercial production and retail sale of cannabis to those age 21 or older.

The California Assembly Committee on Public Safety is anticipated to vote on the measure by late January.

Last week, the American Medical Association resolved that "marijuana's status as a federal Schedule I controlled substance be reviewed with the goal of facilitating the conduct of clinical research and development of cannabinoid-based medicines." The organization had previously called for cannabis to be "retained in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act," a legal classification that defines the substance and its natural

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## **Marijuana-Related Health Costs Minimal Compared To Those Of Alcohol, Tobacco**

**Victoria, Canada:** Health-related costs per user are eight times higher for drinkers than they are for those who use cannabis, and are more than 40 times higher for tobacco smokers, according to a report published in the *British Columbia Mental Health and Addictions Journal*.

According to the report, "In terms of [health-related] costs per user: tobacco-related health costs are over \$800 per user, alcohol-related health costs are much lower at \$165 per user, and cannabis-related health costs are the lowest at \$20 per user."

The review, authored by researchers from the Centre for Addictions Research of British Columbia at the University of Victoria and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse at the University of Ottawa, stated: "Alcohol is used by a very large number of people with the vast majority of these using in low- or moderate-risk ways. Conversely, cannabis and tobacco are used by far fewer people. The majority of cannabis use is low- and moderate-risk, however, while the majority of tobacco is high-risk."

The study reported that "94 percent of social costs for cannabis are linked to [law] enforcement."

The authors concluded: "The harms, risks and social costs of alcohol, cannabis and tobacco vary greatly. A lot has to do with how the substances are handled legally. Alcohol and tobacco are legal substances, which explains their low enforcement costs relative to cannabis. On the other hand, the health costs

per user of tobacco and alcohol are much higher than for cannabis. This may indicate that cannabis use involves fewer health risks than alcohol or tobacco.

"These variations in risk, harms and cost need to be taken into account as we think about further efforts to deal with the use of these three substances. ... Efforts to reduce social costs related to cannabis, for example, will likely involve shifting its legal status by decriminalizing casual use, to reduce the high enforcement costs. Such a shift may be warranted given the apparent lower health risk associated with most cannabis use."

Commenting on the study, NORML Deputy Director Paul Armentano, co-author of the book *Marijuana Is Safer: So Why Are We Driving People to Drink?* (Chelsea Green, 2009) said, "It makes no sense for our society to condone, if not encourage, the use of alcohol – an intoxicant that directly contributes to tens of thousands of deaths annually and countless social problems – while simultaneously stigmatizing and criminalizing the use of cannabis, a substance that is incapable of causing lethal overdose and is associated with far fewer societal costs."

According to a recent Rasmussen national poll of 1,000 likely voters, Americans believe by more than two to one that alcohol is "more dangerous" than marijuana.

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: [paul@norml.org](mailto:paul@norml.org). Full text of the report, entitled "Cannabis, tobacco, and alcohol use in Canada: Comparing risks of harm and costs to society," appears in the journal *Visions: British Columbia's Health and Addictions Journal* and is available online at: <http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/publications/visions>.

## **Colorado: Breckenridge Voters Overwhelmingly Decide To End Pot Penalties**

**Breckenridge, CO, USA:** Voters on Tuesday

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Over 70 percent of voters endorsed Measure 2F, which amends the town code to remove all criminal and civil penalties, including fines, on the private possession of up to one ounce of marijuana. Passage of the initiative also eliminates local penalties prohibiting the possession of cannabis paraphernalia by those age 21 or older.

Proponents of the measure, Sensible Breckenridge, gathered 1,400 signatures from registered voters to place the measure on the municipal ballot.

"This votes demonstrates that Breckenridge citizens overwhelmingly believe that adults should not be punished for making the safer choice to use marijuana instead of alcohol," said Sean McAllister, chair of Sensible Breckenridge and a member of the NORML Legal Committee.

The new law takes effect on January 1, 2010.

*For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500 or visit: <http://www.sensiblecolorado.org>.*

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## **CO: Attorney General Backs Reducing Pot Penalties, Taxing Medical Cannabis Sales**

**Denver, CO, USA:** State Attorney General John Suthers has endorsed recommendations made by the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice that seek to substantially reduce state penalties prohibiting the possession of marijuana for personal use.

Suthers told the *Denver Post* that he believes that legislators should "move forward" with

the Commission's recommendations, which call for amending state law so that the possession of up to four ounces of marijuana would be classified as a petty offense. Under present law, marijuana possession offenses involving up to one ounce or less are categorized as a petty offense, punishable by a \$100 fine. Offenses involving larger amounts of cannabis (up to eight ounces) are classified as a misdemeanor, punishable by up to 18 months in jail. Possession of more than eight ounces of cannabis is classified as a felony, punishable by up to three years in jail.

The Commission further recommended that pot possession offenses involving over four ounces of cannabis, but less than 16 ounces, be classified as a misdemeanor.

"Marijuana penalties should be reduced," Suthers affirmed. The Commission voted 13 to 1 in favor of the amended penalties.

In a separate action last week, Suthers issued an opinion stating that the state can legally collect taxes on the retail sales of medical cannabis. Suther's statements were in response to an inquiry by Democrat Gov. Bill Ritter.

According to *U.S. News & World Report*, the state's medical dispensaries will be subject to a 3.62 percent city sales tax starting on December 1.

State lawmakers are expected to introduce legislation in January that seeks to impose statewide and local excise taxes on marijuana production and sales.

To date, only California collects state taxes on the retail sale of medical cannabis.

*For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500.*

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## **Maine: Voters Approve Medical Marijuana Dispensaries Measure**

**Augusta, ME, USA:** Voters decided on Tuesday in favor of a statewide ballot proposal expanding the state's decade-old medical marijuana law.

Nearly 60 percent of state voters endorsed Question 5: the Maine Marijuana Medical Act, which amends existing state law by: establishing a confidential patient registry; expanding the list of qualifying conditions for which a physician may recommend medicinal cannabis; and by allowing for the creation of state-licensed nonprofit dispensaries to assist in the distribution of marijuana to qualified patients.

The measure was opposed primarily by law enforcement agencies, including the Maine Prosecutors Association and the Maine Chiefs of Police Association.

Tuesday's vote marks the first time that citizens have voted specifically on the question of allowing for state-licensed medical marijuana dispensaries. Two other states, New Mexico and Rhode Island, have previously passed legislation allowing for state licensed marijuana distribution centers.

Medical marijuana dispensaries are presently operating in California and Colorado, but these operations are not licensed by the state.

In 1999, 61 percent of state voters approved the physician-supervised use of medical marijuana. However, the law did not establish a state identification registry for qualified patients, nor did it address regulating the distribution of medical marijuana.

Under state law, patients with a doctor's permission may legally possess up to two and one-half ounces of marijuana and/or up

to three mature marijuana plants for medicinal purposes. *For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500, or visit: <http://www.mainepatientsrights.org>.*

## **Dutch Marijuana Use Lower Than European Average, Study Says**

**Lisbon, Portugal:** Marijuana use among Dutch citizens is lower than the European average, according to survey data published last week in a report by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

According to the 2009 annual report, entitled "The State of the Drugs Problem in Europe," among adults in the Netherlands, 5.4 percent are cannabis users, compared with the European average of 6.8 percent.

Under Dutch law, citizens over 18 years of age may legally purchase and consume cannabis at licensed cafes (so-called 'coffee-shops') located throughout the nation.

Among European adults, approximately 22 percent acknowledge having ever consumed marijuana. By contrast, in the United States over 40 percent of adults have experimented with the drug.

Over the past several decades numerous European nations, such as Portugal and Belgium, have adopted policies depenalizing cannabis possession.

According to the World Health Organization study published last year, the United States possesses the highest rate of illicit drug use in the world. "The US, which has been driving much of the world's drug research and drug policy agenda, stands out with higher levels of use of alcohol, cocaine, and cannabis, despite punitive illegal drug policies," the study reported.

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

<continued from previous page> "The Netherlands, with a less criminally punitive approach to cannabis use than the US, has experienced lower levels of use, particularly among younger adults. Clearly, by itself, a punitive policy towards possession and use accounts for limited variation in nation-level rates of illegal drug use."

The EMCDDA report concluded, "Europe is moving into a period of declining levels of cannabis use."

*For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500 or Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the 2009 annual EMCDDA report is available online at: <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/annual-report/2009>.*

### **Last Chance To Register For NORML's 26th Annual Key West Legal Seminar ... Til Next Year!**

**Washington, DC, USA:** NORML is still accepting registrations from criminal defense attorneys for its 26th annual Key West Legal Seminar.

This year's event takes place **Thursday, December 3 through Saturday, December 5** at the Pier House Resort and Caribbean Spa in Key West, Florida. Join NORML's staff and many of the nation's top marijuana lawyers in one of America's most 'pot-friendly' cities.

Speakers at this year's conference include:

**\* NOTE! The Willamette Valley NORML Public meeting \* Happens every 4th Sat. of the month and will be at h'ERb'S Toasted Subs, 1210 Willamette St, Eugene call: 541.517-0957 -or- visit: <http://WillametteValleyNORML.org>**



***It's One Hell of A Joint!***

Visit - <http://herbstoastedsubs.com/> - and see!

Gerald Goldstein, past president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL) and legal counsel for the late-Hunter S. Thompson; Jeralyn Merritt, television legal analyst for MSNBC and host of the popular website TalkLeft.com; NORML Legal Committee Co-Chair Michael Stepanian; and NORML Executive Director **Allen St. Pierre.**

NORML's annual legal seminar is fully accredited in every state that requires continuing legal education (CLE) for attorneys.

*Conference agenda, registration, and accommodations information for the 2009 NORML Key West Legal Seminar is available online at:*

*[http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group\\_ID=5341](http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=5341).*

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