



US Drug Enforcement Administration Targets Montana State Lawmaker Over Her Advocacy For Medical Marijuana

Missoula, MT: The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is [investigating](#) a Montana state lawmaker over whether statements she made during the 2011 legislative session in favor of regulating the production and distribution of medical cannabis under state law may constitute conspiracy to violate federal anti-drug laws.

The lawmaker, Rep. Diane Sands -- a Democrat from Billings, Montana -- served as the chairwoman of a 2011 interim legislative committee that sought to clarify statewide rules regulating the use of medicinal cannabis, which has been legal in the state since 2004.

"Can you say McCarthy?" Rep. Sands [told](#) *The Missoulian* newspaper. "This sounds like stuff from the House Un-American Activities Committee and Joe McCarthy. So once you talk about medical marijuana in reasonable terms, you're on some sort of list of possible conspirators. ... It's ridiculous,

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Study: Passage Of Medical Marijuana Laws Correlated With Fewer Suicides

"Policymakers weighing the pros and cons of legalization should consider... that (these) laws may lead to fewer suicides among young adult males"

Bonn, Germany: The enactment of statewide laws allowing for the limited use of cannabis therapeutically [is associated with reduced instances of suicide](#), according

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Detroit: Court Of Appeals Rules That 2010 Legalization Initiative Should Have Gone Before Voters

Detroit, MI: The Michigan Court of Appeals [ruled](#) 2-1 last week that city election officials illegally blocked voters in 2010 from deciding on a municipal ballot [initiative](#) that sought to

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New York City: Low-Level Pot Arrests Soar Despite Police Commissioner's Objections

2011 Marks Seventh Straight Year Police Have Reported An Increase In Marijuana Arrests

New York, NY: New York City police are [continuing to make](#) near-record numbers of minor marijuana arrests despite a directive from the city's police commissioner

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Medical Marijuana Laws Have No Discernible Adverse Impact On Adolescents' Use, Study Says

Montreal, Canada: The enactment of state laws allowing for the limited legal use of cannabis by qualified patients has little to no causal effect on broader

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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 -----

You can Snail Mail:

The W-V-NORML Newsletter team by writing to -

**P.O. Box 10957
Eugene, OR 97440**

E-mailing:

newsroom@willamettevalleynorml.org

or phoning: **541-517-0957**

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**

Willamette Valley NORML is your local network in 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 US DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION TARGETS MONTANA STATE LAWMAKER OVER HER ADVOCACY FOR MEDICAL MARIJUANA, page 1 > of course, but it's also threatening to think that the federal government is willing to use its influence and try to chill discussion about this subject."

Neither the DEA nor the U.S. Attorney's Office would respond to inquiries from *The Missoulian* regarding why Rep. Sands' name came up in the federal government's investigation.

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

<continued from STUDY: PASSAGE OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA LAWS CORRELATED WITH FEWER SUICIDES, page 1 > to a [discussion paper](#) published in January by the Institute for the Study of Labor in Bonn, Germany. Researchers at Montana State University, the University of Colorado, and San Diego State University assessed rates of suicide in the years before and after the passage of statewide medical marijuana laws.



Authors found, "The total suicide rate falls smoothly during the pre-legalization period in both MML (medical marijuana law) and non-MML states. However, beginning in year zero, the trends diverge: the suicide rate in MML states continues to fall, while the suicide rate in states that never legalized medical marijuana begins to climb gradually."

They reported that this downward trend in suicides in states post-legalization was especially pronounced in males. "Our results suggest that the passage of a medical marijuana law is associated with an almost 5 percent reduction in the total suicide rate, an 11 percent reduction in the suicide rate of 20-through 29-year-old males, and a 9 percent reduction in the suicide rate of 30- through 39-year-old males," they determined.

Authors theorized that the limited legalization of cannabis may "lead to an improvement in the psychological well-being of young adult

males, an improvement that is reflected in fewer suicides." They further speculated, "The strong association between alcohol consumption and suicide-related outcomes found by previous researchers raises the possibility that medical marijuana laws reduce the risk of suicide by decreasing alcohol consumption."

They concluded: "Policymakers weighing the pros and cons of legalization should consider the possibility that medical marijuana laws may lead to fewer suicides among young adult males."

Full text of the discussion paper, "High on Life: Medical Marijuana Laws and Suicide," is available online at: <http://ftp.iza.org/dp6280.pdf>.

For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 583-5500 or Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org.

<continued from NEW YORK CITY: LOW-LEVEL POT ARRESTS SOAR DESPITE POLICE COMMISSIONER'S OBJECTIONS, page 1 > advising them to do otherwise.

City police officers in 2011 made 50,680 arrests for violations of NY State Penal Law 221.10, which involves cases where marijuana was either used or possessed in public. The total is the [second-highest](#) annual number of pot arrests ever recorded by the NYPD and marks the seventh straight year that police have reported an increase in arrests.

Last September, New York City Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly [issued an internal order](#) directing cops to cease making such arrests after [an investigation](#)



by public radio station WNYC questioned their legality. It concluded that police routinely conduct warrantless 'stop-and-frisk' searches of civilians, find marijuana hidden on their persons, and then falsely charge them with possessing pot 'open to public view.'

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<continued from previous page> Under state [law](#), suspects found with small amounts of cannabis on their person are supposed to be ticketed but not arrested.

Bipartisan legislation that seeks to reduce the penalties associated with the possession of cannabis in public to conform to those associated with private pot possession is [pending](#) in both the state senate and the state assembly.

Over the past two years, it is estimated that the city has spent over \$150 million dollars on the arrest and prosecution of low-level pot offenders, some [85 percent](#) of whom are either African American or Latino.

According to [an analysis](#) by the Drug Policy Alliance, in the last five years the NYPD under Mayor Michael Bloomberg has made more marijuana arrests (2007 to 2011 = 227,093) than it did in the 24 years from 1978 through 2001 under Mayor Giuliani, Mayor Dinkins, and Mayor Koch combined (1978 to 2001 = 226,861).

An online analysis of marijuana arrest in New York and other major cities nationwide is now available online by the Marijuana Arrests Research Project at: <http://www.marijuana-arrests.com>.

For more information, please contact Keith Stroup, NORML Legal Counsel, at (202) 483-5500 or visit: <http://www.marijuana-arrests.com>.

<continued from DETROIT: COURT OF APPEALS RULES THAT 2010 LEGALIZATION INITIATIVE SHOULD HAVE GONE BEFORE VOTERS, page 1 > remove marijuana possession penalties for those age 21 or older.

Proponents of the ballot measure, the [Coalition for a Safer Detroit](#), collected over 6,000 signatures from registered voters in 2010 [to place](#) the measure on that year's fall ballot. The vote never took place, however, because election officials alleged that the proposal conflicted with state anti-drug laws. A trial court agreed with their opinion.

On Friday, the state Court of Appeals reversed that opinion. It [determined](#) that the proposed ballot measure "on its face" does not appear to

significantly alter state law. Consequently, "[Plaintiff[s] had a clear legal right to the placement of the initiative on the ballot," the court ruled.

On Tuesday, Krystal Crittendon, corporation counsel for the Detroit law department, [said](#) the city plans to file an appeal with the Michigan Supreme Court. It is not yet clear whether the appeals process will further delay a public vote on the measure, which had been scheduled for August 2012.

For more information, please contact Keith Stroup, NORML Legal Counsel, at (202) 483-5500 or visit: <http://saferdetroit.net>.

<continued from MEDICAL MARIJUANA LAWS HAVE NO DISCERNIBLE ADVERSE IMPACT ON ADOLESCENTS' USE, STUDY SAYS, page 1 > marijuana use, according to [data](#) published online in the journal *Annals of Epidemiology*.

Investigators at McGill University in Montreal obtained state-level estimates of marijuana use from the 2002 through 2009 US National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Researchers used difference-in-differences regression models to estimate the causal effect of medical cannabis laws on marijuana use, and simulations to account for measurement error.

Authors [reported](#): "Difference-in-differences estimates suggested that passing MMLs (medical marijuana laws) decreased past-month use among adolescents ... and had no discernible effect on the perceived riskiness of monthly use. ... [These] estimates suggest that reported adolescent marijuana use may actually decrease following the passing of medical marijuana laws."

They concluded, "We find limited evidence of causal effects of medical marijuana laws on measures of reported marijuana use."

Previous investigations by researcher teams at [Brown University](#) in 2011 and [Texas A&M](#) in 2007 made similar determinations, concluding, "[C]onsistent with other studies of the liberalization of cannabis laws, medical cannabis laws do not appear to increase use of the drug."

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<continued from previous page> The McGill researchers' findings are in conflict with public statements made by Drug Czar Gil Kerlikowske, who in recent years has frequently [alleged](#) that the passage of medical cannabis laws is directly responsible for higher levels of self-reported marijuana consumption among US teenagers.

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org, or Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500. Full text of the study, "Do medical marijuana laws increase marijuana use? Replication study and extension," appears in the journal *Annals of Epidemiology*.

Full text of the initiative, the Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol Act of 2012, is available online [here: http://www.regulatemarijuana.org/s/regulate-marijuana-alcohol-act-2012](http://www.regulatemarijuana.org/s/regulate-marijuana-alcohol-act-2012).

Delaware: Federal Threats Halt Efforts To Implement State's Medicinal Cannabis Law

Dover, DE: Democrat Gov. Jack Markell has abruptly [halted](#) plans to implement legislation passed in 2011 that allows qualified patients to obtain marijuana from state-licensed facilities.



Governor Markell had initially [signed](#) the [law](#), Senate Bill 17, The Delaware Medical Marijuana Act, last May. Under the law, patients with a qualifying illness may legally possess up to six ounces of cannabis, provided they obtain it from a state-licensed, not-for-profit 'compassion center.' State regulators anticipated to begin licensing marijuana producers and distributors later this year.

On Friday, Gov. Markell [announced that he was suspending the program](#) because his office received a letter from the Obama Justice Department alleging that its implementation would subject those licensed under the law, as well as public servants, to federal criminal prosecution.

States the letter, authored by US Attorney Charles M. Oberly III, "[G]rowing, distributing and possessing marijuana, in any capacity, other than as part of a federally authorized research program, is a violation of federal law regardless of state laws permitting such activities. Moreover, those who engage in financial transactions involving the proceeds of such activities may also be in violation of federal money laundering statutes."

The letter further threatens, "State employees who conduct activities mandated by the Delaware Medical Marijuana Act are not

Colorado: Petitioners Turn In Final Signatures For 2012 Ballot Measure

Denver, CO: Sponsors of a proposed 2012 statewide measure to regulate the personal use of marijuana [turned in](#) 14,000 signatures on Friday in an attempt to qualify the measure for the November ballot.

The measure's proponents, the [Campaign to Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol](#), had previously turned in over 160,000 signatures several weeks earlier. However, the Secretary of State's office on February 3 responded that petitioners [still needed](#) an additional 2,500 valid signatures from registered voters to place the [initiative](#) on the November ballot.

The Secretary of State's office has until Monday, February 27, to verify the final signature count.

The Colorado initiative seeks to allow for the limited possession and cultivation of cannabis by adults age 21 and over. The measure would further amend state law to establish regulations governing the commercial production and distribution of marijuana by licensed retailers.

The measure is supported by a broad [coalition](#) of reform organizations, including NORML, the [American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado](#), [SAFER](#), [Sensible Colorado](#), [Law Enforcement Against Prohibition \(LEAP\)](#), [Students for Sensible Drug Policy \(SSDP\)](#), the [Drug Policy Alliance](#), and the [Marijuana Policy Project](#).

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<continued from previous page> immune from liability under" the federal Controlled Substances Act.

Justice Department officials [sent similar letters](#) to lawmakers and governors in states considering related legislation last spring. Shortly after receiving the letters, Washington Democrat Gov. Chris Gregoire [vetoed](#) legislation that sought to allow for licensed cannabis dispensaries in that state. Soon thereafter, Rhode Island Independent Gov. Lincoln Chafee also [nixed](#) regulations allowing for the state-licensed production and distribution of cannabis.

In a statement issued by Gov. Markell on Friday, he claimed that the federal government left him with no other alternative but to suspend the law's implementation. "To do otherwise would put our state employees in legal jeopardy, and I will not do that," he said.

In response to the Governor's actions, sponsors of the law have [suggested](#) amending the Medical Marijuana Act to allow for qualified patients to cultivate cannabis at home, a practice that is presently allowed under state law in [14 other states](#).

To date, three states -- Colorado, Maine, and New Mexico -- have issued licenses to allow for the state-sanctioned production and distribution of cannabis. So far, programs in those states have operated largely without federal interference.

Similar licensing legislation approved in recent years in Arizona, New Jersey, Vermont, and Washington, DC has yet to be implemented by local lawmakers.

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.

Washington: Marijuana Regulation Measure Certified For 2012 Ballot

Olympia, WA: State election officials on Friday [approved](#) a statewide measure for the November ballot that seeks to regulate the production and distribution of marijuana for adults.

Sponsored by [New Approach Washington](#), the measure -- [Initiative 502](#) -- will technically first go before state lawmakers. If legislators fail to endorse the measure, then it will go directly before the voters this fall.

New Approach Washington collected over 350,000 signatures from registered voters to qualify I-502 for this year's ballot. [Backers](#) of I-502 include two former US attorneys -- John McKay from the George W. Bush administration and Kate Pflaumer who held the job under President Clinton -- as well as Seattle's former FBI agent-in-charge Charles Mandigo.



If enacted, the measure would remove state criminal and civil penalties regarding the possession of up to one ounce of marijuana by adults age 21 or over. It would not alter existing state prohibitions regarding the private cultivation of cannabis for non-medical patients.

I-502 also seeks to enact statewide regulations allowing for the commercial production and sale of marijuana to adults in state licensed stores. The measure [does not amend](#) any existing regulations regarding the possession or cultivation of marijuana by qualified patients, who are already [permitted](#) under state law to grow up to 15 plants and possess up to 24 ounces of cannabis.

If passed, I-502 would also [impose new per se traffic safety standards](#) for anyone over age 21 who operates a motor vehicle with detectable levels of active THC in blood above 5ng/ml. (The presence of inactive THC metabolites in blood or urine would not qualify as a violation under the proposed law.) The [controversial provision](#) would lower the legal standard necessary in Washington for a criminal DUI cannabis conviction from one that requires the state to show recency of marijuana use and a positive relationship between that use and behavioral impairment to one that merely requires prosecutors to prove that a defendant

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<continued from previous page> operated a motor vehicle with trace levels of THC in his or her blood. I-502 will not lower the probable cause requirements that must presently be met before the state can legally demand a suspect's blood.

To date, [few states](#) have enacted such *per se* standards for THC because its presence at low levels in blood is viewed by some experts to be [an inconsistent predictor](#) of behavioral impairment, particularly in more frequent consumers who may potentially [test positive for residual THC levels](#) in their blood for periods of time exceeding any period of acute impairment.

The Washington state Democratic Party [has endorsed](#) I-502, as has the [King County Bar Association](#), among other groups. *For more information about I-502, please visit New Approach Washington online at: <http://www.newapproachwa.org/home>.*

Cannabis Is "An Effective Treatment" For Cancer Patients, Israeli Study Concludes

Tel Hashomer, Israel: Some two-thirds of Israeli cancer patients authorized to use cannabis report long-term, symptomatic improvement from the plant, according to clinical data presented in January at a conference of the Israeli Oncologists Union and [reported](#) in several international media outlets.

Investigators at the Sheba Medical Center in Tel Aviv, in conjunction with the Israeli Cancer Association, assessed the efficacy of cannabis therapy over the course of one year in 264 patients with cancer. Researchers [reported](#): "Some 61 percent of the respondents reported a significant improvement in their quality of life as a result of the medical marijuana, while 56 percent noted an improvement in their ability to manage pain. In general, 67 percent were in favor of the treatment, while 65 percent said they would recommend it to other patients."

The study concluded that cannabis is an "effective" treatment for certain symptoms of the disease cancer and recommended, "The treatment should be offered to the patients in earlier stages of cancer." In the trial, the most common types of cancer for which medical marijuana was prescribed was lung cancer (21 percent), breast cancer (12 percent) and pancreatic cancer (10

percent). The study focused primarily on the use of cannabis to relieve various symptoms of cancer or cancer treatment, such as pain and nausea, but did not evaluate whether marijuana therapy could potentially suppress the proliferation of the disease. In preclinical trials, various cannabinoids -- including THC and [CBD](#) (cannabidiol) -- have been shown to [selectively target and eliminate](#) malignant cells and cancerous tumors.

To date, some 6,000 Israelis [possess government authorization](#) to use cannabis therapeutically. Patients authorized by the federal program may either cultivate cannabis at home or they may obtain marijuana from one of the nation's 12 licensed cannabis farms.

Last summer, the Israeli Health Ministry formally [acknowledged](#) the therapeutic utility of cannabis and announced newly amended guidelines to more effectively govern the state-sponsored production and distribution of medical marijuana. The Ministry [estimates](#) that as many as 40,000 patients will eventually have access to medicinal cannabis once the Israeli program is fully implemented. *For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. NORML's literature review of the anti-cancer properties of cannabis and cannabinoids is available online at: <http://norml.org/library/item/gliomascancer>.*

Cannabis Use Not Associated With Alterations In Dopamine, Study Says

New York, NY: The consumption of cannabis is not associated with residual alterations in the release of dopamine in chronic users, according to [trial data](#) to be published in journal *Biological Psychiatry*.

[Dopamine](#) is a neurotransmitter that is responsible for reward-driven learning and behavior. Alterations in the brain's production of dopamine is associated with the habitual use of various dependence-inducing intoxicants, including alcohol, heroin, and cocaine.

Investigators at the New York State Psychiatric Institute and Columbia University assessed dopamine levels in 16 recently abstinent, psychiatrically health cannabis users and 16 matched controls. Researchers found that cannabis consumers did not show any significant

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

<continued from CANNABIS USE NOT ASSOCIATED WITH ALTERATIONS IN DOPAMINE, STUDY SAYS, previous page> differences compared to controls in any of the brain regions assessed. Authors concluded, "Unlike other addictions, cannabis dependence of mild to moderate severity is not associated with striatal DA (dopamine) alterations."

They cautioned, however, that early onset use of cannabis or long-term use of the plant may be associated with a decrease in the release of dopamine in the [striatum](#). For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the study, *Dopamine Release in Chronic Cannabis Users: A [(11)C]Raclopride Positron Emission Tomography Study,* will appear in *Biological Psychiatry*.

Register Now For NORML's Seventh Annual Aspen Legal Seminar

Washington, DC: NORML is accepting registrations from criminal defense attorneys and the general public to attend its seventh annual [Aspen Legal Seminar](#). This year's event takes place from Thursday, May 31 through Saturday, June 2 at [The Gant Hotel](#) in downtown Aspen -- one of the nation's most cannabis-friendly cities.

[Topics](#) of discussion at this year's conference include: 'Medical Marijuana and the Workplace,' 'Transitioning from Medical Use to Full Legalization,' 'Defending Paraphernalia and Spice (K-2) Cases,' 'Jury Selection in a Marijuana Case,' and 'How to Use the Latest and Best Science to Defend Against a DUID Marijuana Prosecution.'

"NORML is proud to make this once-a-year legal seminar open to lawyers and the public," said NORML founder and Legal Director Keith Stroup. "Don't miss this rare opportunity to join NORML's staff and some of the nation's top pot lawyers and activists in this unique and intimate setting. *Registration information and this year's conference agenda is online at:* <http://norml.org/about/aspen-legal-seminar>.

* **NOTE!** The Willamette Valley NORML Member meeting happens **every 2nd Sat. of the month** and will be at The Voter Power Office. For more info on meeting visit: <http://w-v-norml.org/Members/meeting.html>



The Willamette Valley NORML Public meeting happens (most!) **every 4th Sat. of the month**

(Excepting Holidays - Nov., Dec. - when it takes place 3rd Sat.!)

and will also be at The Voter Power Office at **687 River Av, Eugene, Oregon** * For more info on meeting call: **541.517-0957** -or- visit: <http://w-v-norml.org/meeting.html>

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