A Recommendation for Measures to Legalize the Use of Cannabis as an Agricultural and Commercial Commodity and for Medicinal Applications*

Citizens Assembly for Critical Thinking about the United States
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The Assembly recommends that policies affecting the production and use of cannabis in the United States be revised in two stages:

Stage 1:

The President should issue a directive to the Attorney General, and to such other executive departments and officers as may be appropriate and necessary, to identify or develop practical standards and methods that may be used to differentiate between industrial hemp, defined as cannabis with low THC content and little utility as a drug-producing plant, and other forms of cannabis that may be practically used to produce plant material with concentrated and readily available psychoactive drug content.

The Presidential directive should further instruct the Food and Drug Administration, and such other executive departments and officers as may be appropriate and necessary, to conduct objective, controlled studies for the specific purpose of identifying any medical or health benefits that may be obtained from the ingestion of marijuana, defined as products containing high-THC content cannabis, including studies on the effects of different levels of dosage or ingestion of this product on human psychological and physical functions. The design and execution of these studies should begin immediately and should be required to produce usable findings within two (2) years. The standards for safety and dependence applied to human use in these studies should be no more rigorous or restrictive than standards already applied in the approval of other prescription pharmaceutical products. The duration of the studies should be no longer than is necessary to reach reasonable and defensible conclusions, identifying some but not necessarily all feasible medical applications.

Upon conclusion of studies that identify feasible medical applications, the Attorney General will be directed to undertake a review of the classification of cannabis or marijuana as a Schedule 1 Drug under the Controlled Substances Act and to actively seek justification to move cannabis as a drug producing medium from Schedule 1 to a lower Schedule, or to remove it entirely from the schedules defined under the Act.

Stage 2:

A law or laws should be passed to accomplish the following purposes:

Part A -- Industrial Hemp Production.

1. The standards and methods used to distinguish industrial hemp from drug-producing varieties of cannabis will be codified in law together with provisions for revising and updating them as necessary.

2. Legal standards, prohibitive taxes, and licensure requirements that prevent the use of industrial hemp as an agricultural and commercial product should be eliminated.

3. Development of such Federal regulation and licensure requirements as may be necessary on the production of industrial hemp as a common agricultural commodity should be assigned to the Department of Agriculture.

4. Federal regulations should allow anyone to grow industrial hemp as long as they intend to produce it as a commercial material rather than for use as a drug.

5. Each state shall have the authority under the law to approve or disapprove production of industrial hemp within its own borders.

6. If a state approves production of industrial hemp, it must abide by the Federal standards for agricultural production of hemp, but may impose additional or more rigorous standards above and beyond the Federal standards.

Part B -- Medical Marijuana

1. Assuming that effective health or medical applications of marijuana are demonstrated by the studies described above, the Food and Drug Administration will be responsible for licensing production and use of marijuana as a drug, but will be directed by law to seek, identify, and approve reasonably safe and effective medical applications of marijuana.

2. Regulations, licensure and approval to grow and process medical marijuana as a commercial pharmaceutical product shall be the responsibility of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture, or such other Departments or Agencies as the Congress may deem appropriate.

3. Each state may establish for itself the laws and regulations under which individuals may, with a prescription or certificate of need issued by a licensed physician, grow limited amounts of high-THC cannabis for treatment of a personal medical condition.

4. Federal laws and regulations intended to control abuse of marijuana as a drug shall not be interpreted or applied to override or restrict the production and use of medical marijuana and industrial hemp as intended in this law.

**A full explanation of the findings and reasons supporting this recommendation will be presented in the Assembly's forthcoming Final Report, which will be published on the Assembly web page.*