

WASHINGTON CAN'T WAIT FOR CLARITY IN MEDICAL MARIJUANA LAWS

- **Eighty-four percent of Washington voters favor** “allowing patients with terminal or debilitating conditions to possess and consume marijuana if their doctors recommend it.”

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, survey of 800 likely voters in the 2012 elections, conducted December 13-19, 2010, and carrying a margin of error of +/- 3.40 at a 95 percent confidence level

- **But our current medical marijuana law:**
 - » ***Creates confusion and fear for patients***

“Having cancer is a really, really bad time to have extra dilemmas.”

Sheryl Gordon McCloud, attorney and breast cancer survivor, testifying before the Senate Health and Long-Term Care Committee on January 20, 2011, video available at TVW.org

“One final thing we can’t afford to forget is this: medical cannabis patients like myself deserve, and are willing to pay for, a dispensary system that provides a safe, secure, and sustainable way to buy the medicine we need.”

Layla Bush, gunshot wound survivor of attack on Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, testifying before the House Ways and Means Committee on March 30, 2011, video available at TVW.org

- » ***Puts patient access to cannabis in a dangerous gray area and compromises public safety***

“By forcing this production to remain underground,” [King County Prosecuting Attorney Dan] Satterberg said, “you increase the risk of violence for everybody and you disburse that violence to residential neighborhoods and put everybody at risk.”

William Yardley, “Violence Prompts Debate Over Medical Marijuana,” New York Times, March 16, 2010

“The City Council is not in favor of getting between patients who have a legitimate medical need and access to that medicine,” city spokesman Rob McNair-Huff said. ... The city also agreed to wait until after the 2011 legislative session to hold hearings.

Susan Kelleher, “Tacoma retreats from threat to close pot dispensaries,” Seattle Times, October 19, 2010

- » ***Wastes law enforcement resources in going after sick patients***

A medical marijuana patient being prosecuted in Kitsap County Superior Court for drug trafficking was found **not guilty** on Tuesday morning, after a jury ruled that his use of the drug was within the law.

“Kitsap medical marijuana defendant acquitted,” Port Orchard Independent, March 24, 2009

Snohomish County's first medical marijuana trial ended in an **acquittal** Thursday. A Snohomish County jury took less than two hours to decide that a former Bothell woman's indoor marijuana-growing operation was legal under the state's medical marijuana law.

Diana Hefley, "Bothell suspect cleared in medical-pot case," Everett Herald, February 19, 2010

Yakima County's first trial over a so-called medical-marijuana dispensary or collective quickly ended in **acquittal** Thursday afternoon. The Superior Court jury that heard the charges against Valtino Hicks of Yakima returned its verdict in less than 25 minutes, unusually quick for almost any criminal trial.

Mark Morey, "Medical-marijuana dispensaries – First county trial ends in acquittal," Yakima Herald-Republic, March 24, 2011

- **SB 5073 has broad support from around the state**

Editorial, *The Tri-City Herald*: "It's a bill containing the kinds of specifics that should take away some of the frustration in the lives of people whose lives already are more difficult than most." January 24, 2011

Editorial, *The News Tribune* [Tacoma]: "As revised, the bill would be a big improvement on the Wild West medicine show that medical marijuana has become in Washington." March 10, 2011

Editorial, *The Seattle Times*: "The medical-marijuana bill in Olympia should be passed, because existing law does not protect legitimate patients or their suppliers from arrest, jail and prosecution." March 15, 2011

Editorial, *The Spokesman-Review*: "By a wide margin, Washington state voters in 1998 passed a medical marijuana initiative, but the Legislature has never devised a system to implement it. This muddle has produced expensive police investigations and controversial arrests that have lost sight of the voters' intent. Finally recognizing this, legislators are establishing a clear system for the purchasing and dispensing of medical marijuana." March 17, 2011

Editorial, *The Olympian*: "Much more clarity is needed in Washington law and that's precisely what Senate Bill 5073 does." March 23, 2011

- **Creating licensed, regulated systems for making cannabis available to qualifying patients for medical use is neither new nor controversial to the federal government.**

Seven other jurisdictions have already done it, including New Mexico, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Maine, Colorado, Arizona – and Washington, D.C., whose laws are subject to Congressional review before taking effect.