



Americans for Safe Access

Activist Newsletter

Defending Patients' Access to Medical Cannabis

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MARYLAND BECOMES 21ST MEDICAL CANNABIS STATE



On April 14, Maryland's Governor Martin O'Malley signed HB 881 into law, making it the 21st medical cannabis state. The Maryland House of Delegates had voted 125-11 the week before to adopt the bill, which will protect registered medical cannabis patients from arrest and prosecution. Patients with state-issued registry cards will be able to obtain their medicine from licensed dispensaries, which will rely on licensed growers for their supply of medical cannabis. Patients with severe pain, nausea, wasting syndrome, seizures, and severe muscle spasms will be required to get approval from physicians who are certified by the state, and must obtain an identification card before they will be eligible to access a licensed dispensary.



Bill-signing ceremony with patients, families, and ASA staffers Mike Liszewski and Hunter Holliman

"This law provides needed protection from arrest and prosecution, and gives patients a means to safely and legally obtain their medicine," said Mike Liszewski, ASAs' Government

Affairs Director, who testified in support. "We're glad to see an end to half-measures."

Maryland has struggled over the past few years to create workable medical cannabis legislation. In 2003, the Maryland legislature adopted the Darrel Putnam Compassionate Use Act, which only provided an affirmative defense, but did not prevent patients from

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Five Medical Cannabis Patients from Washington State Going to Federal Trial



Family members from a rural area of eastern Washington face trial on federal marijuana charges, despite the Obama Administration's repeated claims that it does not target patients. The federal trial of the "Kettle Falls Five" before U.S. District Judge Fred Van Sickle begins May 12 in Spokane, Washington. Because marijuana is prohibited for any use under federal law, patients are routinely denied any type of medical or state law defense in federal court.

Federal agents raided the family home of Larry Harvey, 70, and his wife, Rhonda Firestack-Harvey, 55, near Kettle Falls, Washington in August 2012. In addition to seizing 44 immature cannabis plants, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) confiscated the family's car, \$700 in cash, and their legally owned firearms.

The five federal defendants, including Mrs. Firestack-Harvey's son, Rolland Gregg, and his wife, were all qualified patients in compliance with Washington state law. Defense attorneys say the cannabis being cultivated on a remote corner of the family's 33-acre property was strictly for use by the five qualified patients. Mr. Harvey, who suffers from numerous ailments including heart disease and severe gout, was jailed for several days and denied medical attention, which resulted in irreversible bodily harm.

The federal trial of the five comes despite Department of Justice (DOJ) directives issued in June 2011 and August 2013, both of which reiterate long-standing DOJ guidance to federal prosecutors that individual patients

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VoteMedicalCannabis.org Tracks Votes in Congress



ASA has relaunched an interactive online tool that provides voting statistics and a report card for how each Member of Congress has voted on patient issues.

VoteMedicalCannabis.org contains the voting track record of Congress since 2012, as well as the legislation they have sponsored or cosponsored during the current Congress (2013-2014). The new website assigns a grade of 'A' to 'F' for House Members, and a pass/fail "grade" for Senators. The site identifies as "Patient Champions" any co-sponsors of legislation that would protect state

medical cannabis laws or contribute to a comprehensive federal policy.

The site provides details on last week's vote to allow Veterans Administration physicians to recommend medical cannabis for their patients. Although the amendment didn't pass, it received more "yes" votes from Congress than any other previous effort to reform federal medical marijuana policy. The unprecedented 195 votes in favor, made up of 173 Democrats and 22 Republicans, included a majority of freshman Members of Congress (42 Democrats and two Republicans).

ASA Conference Brings Advocates to DC



More than 200 physicians, researchers and medical cannabis patients gathered in Washington, D.C. at the beginning of April for ASA's second annual National Unity Conference. Two days of panels featured medical and legal experts, policymakers, and a wide array of workshops focusing on scientific research, strategic planning, and skills building. On Monday, ASA hosted a Capitol Hill briefing for Congressional staffers, and more than 200 advocates lobbied their representatives in support of HR 689, the States' Medical Cannabis Patient Protection Acts.

ASA also held an Award Dinner to honor outstanding individuals and organizations:

Patient Advocate of the Year: Sarah Shrader is known for creativity, compassion, and hard-

work. A founding member of SF ASA, she helped pass the first distribution laws before going on to start Sonoma ASA. From organizing DA debates and court support to guiding patients through the legal system, her work has helped thousands of patients.

Courage Award: Bunny Balk got a scholarship to ASA's 2013 National Conference where she developed new advocacy skills that she used to start an ASA chapter in Wisconsin.

ASA Chapter of the Year: San Diego ASA has many accomplishments, including stopping a dispensary ban in Imperial Beach and passing a dispensary ordinance in San Diego.

Action Group of the Year: The Ventura Action

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ACTIVIST PROFILE: Seth Greene, Tennessee



Seth Greene from Bluff City, Tennessee has been lobbying his representatives to make medical cannabis legal and used the National Unity Conference Lobby Day on Capitol Hill to meet with staffers for Tennessee Senators Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker. The 23-year-old treats his cerebral palsy and Seizures Artistes MS with cannabis on the advice of his doctor, even though he "hates breaking the law."



"The time I had at the Conference in D.C was unbelievable. I felt safe and normal, and I learned a lot," he said. Seth is raising funds for a move to Denver, Colorado at giveforward.com so he can have safe access..

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Group has held many events. Their rally at Ventura City Hall and 'Patients are not Criminals' campaign were great successes.

Patient Lobbyist of the Year: Marina Faz-Huppert is the legislative and political director for Local 881 United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, representing members throughout Illinois and NW Indiana.

Researcher of the Year: Noel Palmer is an analytical chemist and Laboratory Director for PalliaTech and PhytaTech CO. He worked closely with ASA and the American Herbal Products Association in drafting the Industry Standards for Laboratory Testing for cannabis.

Elected Official of the Year: Earl Blumenauer (Ore-3) has sponsored multiple bills on behalf of medical cannabis. He accepted with a video statement for the dinner.

Patient Partnership Award: Roy Upton, RH, DAyu, is the founder, executive director, and editor of the American Herbal Pharmacopoeia (AHP), where he led the development of the AHP's landmark Cannabis Monograph.

Medical Professional of the Year: Stephen Corn, M.D. is an anesthesiologist, researcher, inventor and Harvard Medical School professor who cofounded the educational website TheAnswerPage.com that works with ASA to provide information about medical cannabis.

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should not be a priority. The latest memorandum says it is "not an efficient use of federal resources to focus enforcement efforts on seriously ill individuals." Those memos are not binding, however, leaving U.S. Attorneys free to pick which cases to prosecute.

"This case is another glaring example of what's wrong with the federal policy on cannabis," said Kari Boiter, ASA's Washington State Coordinator. "If the U.S. Attorney can continue to prosecute patients without any consequences, none of these DOJ memos are worth the paper they're printed on."

The Kettle Falls Five were indicted in February 2013 and charged with six felonies each: conspiracy to manufacture and distribute marijuana, manufacture of marijuana, possession with intent to distribute marijuana, distribution of marijuana, possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime and maintaining a drug-involved premises.

Only 44 plants were seized at the time of the 2012 raid, but federal prosecutors have charged the defendants with growing more than the 100-plant threshold that triggers a five-year mandatory minimum sentence by alleging there were more plants grown in previous years. The gun charge carries an additional five-year mandatory minimum sentence. Prosecutors are seeking a minimum of 10 year in prison, despite repeated calls by U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to end mandatory minimum sentencing for non-violent drug crimes. As part of a joint defense agreement, attorneys sent a letter to AG Holder asking him to reconsider the prosecution.

ACTION ALERT—How Did Your Rep Vote on VA Access?

Congress just held an historic vote on medical cannabis. How did your Representative vote? Find out now at VoteMedicalCannabis.org and send a message of thanks or disappointment. Contact your Congressional Representative today with ASA's easy online tool! AmericansForSafeAccess.org/veteransvote.

SPRING MEMBERSHIP DRIVE ADDS DISCOUNTS

ASA's Spring Membership Drive is your chance to take advantage of exclusive member benefits. Join during the month of May and receive special ASA merchandise.

As an ASA Member you'll not only be part of making safe access a reality everywhere, you'll get special members-only discounts on ASA publications, priority access on ASA's legal support hotline, and discounts on ASA confer-

ences and other events. You'll also get discounts on a wide variety of products and services, including Cannabis Training Institute, Hertz car rentals, Peace Coffee, and up to 60% off Working Advantage entertainment products, including tickets to ski areas, amusement parks, zoos and museums, and much more. Join today by mailing in the form below or find out more at AmericansForSafeAccess.org/membership_benefits.

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being arrested, prosecuted, or having to pay a fine. Last year, the legislature passed HB 1101, which allows "Academic Medical Centers" to distribute cannabis to patients, but eligible hospitals declined to participate.

HB 881 was sponsored by Del. Cheryl Glenn (D-Baltimore) and co-sponsored by nearly half the House. The coalition supporting the bill included ASA, industry stakeholders, and Stop the Seizures, a parents group. Amendments to help patients navigate the program were added by Sen. Jamie Raskin (D-Montgomery).

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In Memoriam: George Vogel

George and Garrett Vogel appeared on stage together last month at ASA's National Unity Conference to tell their father-son story. Shortly after the conference, George died due to complications from a surgery. Garrett said his father was "so proud" of speaking at the conference and is grateful they had a last chance to bond there in a "last hurrah." Our heartfelt condolences go out to Garrett and the rest of the Vogel family.