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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Earl Blumenauer".

**Statement for the Record**

**February 14, 2013**

**Congressman Earl Blumenauer**

Today, along with a bipartisan group of cosponsors, I am introducing the States' Medical Marijuana Patient Protection Act, legislation that will allow medical marijuana patients and businesses – who are complying with state law – the ability to access and distribute marijuana free from federal interference.

Eighteen states and the District of Columbia have passed laws allowing for the use of medical marijuana for people suffering from conditions such as cancer and severe nausea. As a result there are now hundreds of thousands of medical marijuana patients nationwide. Despite these laws, at the federal level marijuana is currently listed as a Schedule I substance under the Controlled Substances Act, meaning that it is considered a substance with a “high potential for abuse,” with “no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States.” This means that the 19 jurisdictions that permit medical marijuana are operating in a patchwork of inconsistent local and federal laws.

These inconsistencies create significant challenges for both patients and the businesses working to provide access to medical marijuana. Because of federal tax and banking laws, marijuana businesses – despite operating in compliance with state or local law – are not allowed to deduct their legitimate business expenses and are often unable to make deposits or maintain bank accounts. Simultaneously, the federal government has continued to enforce federal law, and many medical marijuana facilities across the country have been raided by the Drug Enforcement Administration or otherwise targeted by the Department of Justice.

The federal government maintains a monopoly on access to marijuana for research, currently run by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). The mission of this Institute is to “lead the Nation in bringing the power of science to bear on drug abuse and addiction,” and many researchers have found it difficult to obtain marijuana for research into the potential therapeutic or medicinal effects of marijuana.

The States' Medical Marijuana Patient Protection Act would provide for the rescheduling of marijuana under the Controlled Substance Act to a listing other than Schedule I or II, which would mean the federal government recognizes an accepted medical use. It would also ensure that neither the Controlled Substances Act nor the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act would restrict individuals, doctors or businesses from consuming, recommending, producing, distributing or otherwise operating in marijuana in compliance with state or local laws. Finally, it would require that access to marijuana for research into its potential medicinal and therapeutic uses be overseen by an entity in the government not focused on researching the addictive properties of substances.

Nineteen jurisdictions have passed laws recognizing the importance of providing access to medical marijuana for the hundreds of thousands of patients who rely on it. It is time for the federal government to respect these decisions, and stop inhibiting safe access.