



Americans for Safe Access Monthly Newsletter

Defending Patients' Access to Medical Marijuana

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www.SafeAccessNow.org

Medicinal Cannabis Measure Receives Record Number of Votes in Congress

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One month after opening its National Office, ASA started its work on Capitol Hill by helping to build support for the Hinchey-Rohrabacher Amendment. If passed, the amendment would have prohibited the Department of Justice from using valuable Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

funds to conduct raids, arrests, and prosecutions of medical cannabis patients and their providers in the 11 states that have passed medical cannabis laws.

While the Hinchey-Rohrabacher amendment did not pass this year, it earned a record number of votes, 163 on the House floor, and ASA's strategy in 2006 has helped create a base of support that will lead to future victories.



Garry Silva, who was raided by the DEA in March, joined the ASA citizen lobbying teams in DC.

"The House has missed the opportunity to show its support for seriously ill people, to prove that it believes in states rights, and to endorse the allocation of precious law enforcement funds to programs that are endorsed by all citizens and state governments," stated

Steph Sherer, founder and Director, Americans for Safe Access. "But with the record number of votes the amendment received in June, ASA and the medical cannabis community continue to build momentum toward reform."

To help U.S. Representatives Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) build support for their bi-partisan

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Patient Evades Jail, Granted Right to Use Marijuana While on Probation

As a result of testing positive in May 2006 while on probation, California medical marijuana patient Rachel Jones* was charged with violating her probation conditions. Ignoring Rachel's doctor's recommendation, which established her status as a qualified patient, her probation officer recommended jail time.

Turning to her attorney, a Los Angeles public defender, Rachel sought to fight the threat of jail time. Unfortunately, her public

defender did not believe that Rachel had a viable medical condition, and when she went to court, the judge sentenced Rachel to a year in jail. With nowhere left to turn, Rachel contacted ASA seeking our help.

ASA Chief Counsel Joe Elford contacted the Los Angeles public defender office to report the substandard legal representation, and encouraged them to utilize the legal decision in *People v. Jones*, which upheld a patient's

recommendation as all that is needed for a jury to establish patient status. To her surprise, when Rachel went to court to turn herself in, her attorney got the court to reverse her sentence. Not only did the court set aside Rachel's sentence, but her attorney was also able to get her probation conditions amended by court order to allow her to consume marijuana while on probation.

As an African-American woman on a

fixed income, Rachel was vulnerable, like so many others, to a system that mistreats patients and those with limited means of defense. ASA is determined to fight for the rights of patients like Rachel and, as such, has been working with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to help improve a policy issued November 28, 2006, that exempts patients on probation or parole from testing for marijuana.

*Rachel's last name has been changed to protect her identity.

Congress Chooses to Continue Raiding, Prosecuting Patients & Providers

Americans for Safe Access

www.SafeAccessNow.org

1322 Webster Street, Ste. 208
Oakland, CA 94612

Phone: 510-251-1856

Fax: 510-251-2036

Email: info@SafeAccessNow.org

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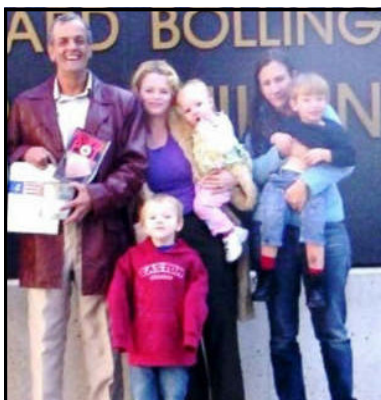
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Mail to:

Americans for Safe Access
1322 Webster St., Ste. 208
Oakland, CA 94612



Jacqueline Patterson with her children and federal medical marijuana patient, George McMahon.

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amendment, ASA launched an aggressive multi-faceted campaign that included citizen-advocate lobbying visits to more than twenty offices in two days, production of our first-ever video news release, which was distributed to more than 2000 media outlets, a full-page advertisement in *Roll Call*, the newspaper of Capitol Hill, and coordinated grassroots advocacy, including hundreds of phone calls and emails urging Congress to end the

federal raids.

On June 19 and 20, two teams of ASA member patients, doctors, and scientific researchers met with more than 20 Congressional offices and left information in an additional 60 offices. This was the first time medical cannabis patients, doctors, and researchers collectively lobbied Members of Congress and their key staff. Additionally, this was the first opportunity many Congressional staffers had to

meet and talk with medical cannabis experts and patients - let alone an individual who was raided by the DEA for being a law-abiding patient.

With your help, ASA will continue to work on this important measure until it passes and patients in medical cannabis states are safe from federal raids and prosecutions. Thanks for all your phone calls, emails, and continued dedication to medicinal cannabis. We can't do it without you.

Local Activist Focus: Jacqueline Patterson, Kansas City, MO

Jacqueline Patterson has been an ASA activist in Missouri for several years. In 2002, Jacqueline organized a Kansas City action as part of ASA's "Evict the DEA" national day of action. Since then, she has been active with both federal and state campaigns, working to protect medical marijuana patients like herself.

In October 2005, Jacqueline organized another local ASA action - "Rally to Reschedule Marijuana" - at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regional office in Kansas City. Several patients and advocates rallied and called for the rescheduling of marijuana. A representative of the HHS office met with activists in front of the building, including George McMahon, one of the seven patients who receive medical marijuana legally from the federal government.

Jacqueline is currently working with the Missouri state legislature to pass a bill that would protect medical marijuana

patients. She has testified at two hearings this year for Missouri's medical marijuana bill, House Bill 1831. Most recently, she testified before the Health Committee, sharing her personal story of growing up with cerebral palsy and how medical marijuana has helped her.

Jacqueline's efforts have earned her extensive media coverage. Kansas City's *Pitch Weekly* recently published a feature story on Jacqueline's life and activist efforts. She will also be highlighted in a television documentary on medical marijuana.

In addition to her activist work, Jacqueline is busy raising four children. She is currently working on attaining her criminology degree and revamping her campaign to educate the public and legislators about the efficacy of medical marijuana.

To get involved in the Midwest visit www.myspace.com/medicalmaryjane or www.dpfks.org or email Jacqueline at medicalmaryjane@hotmail.com

National Action Alert: Praise or Haze Your Congressional Representative for His/Her Vote on the Hinchey-Rohrabacher Medical Marijuana Amendment

On June 28th, the House voted on the Hinchey-Rohrabacher amendment, which would have stopped DEA raids and prosecutions of patients and providers in the 11 states that have passed medical marijuana laws. While the amendment did not pass this session, it earned a record number of votes - 163 - on the House floor. Please write or call your Congressional Representative to praise or haze him/her for his/her vote on the Hinchey-Rohrabacher amendment! Call the Congressional Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 or write to your Representative using ASA's online action center: www.SafeAccessNow.org/HincheyPraiseHaze