

Resolution No. 32

Submitted by:

The Honorable Bob Filner  
Mayor of San Diego

The Honorable Mike McGinn  
Mayor of Seattle

The Honorable Jean Quan  
Mayor of Oakland

The Honorable Steve Hogan  
Mayor of Aurora, CO

The Honorable Marilyn Strickland  
Mayor of Tacoma

The Honorable Tom Bates  
Mayor of Berkeley

The Honorable Stephen Cassidy  
Mayor of San Leandro

The Honorable Matthew Ryan  
Mayor of Binghamton

**IN SUPPORT OF STATES SETTING THEIR OWN MARIJUANA POLICIES  
WITHOUT FEDERAL INTERFERENCE**

1. **WHEREAS**, the United States Conference of Mayors has long advocated for a fair and effective criminal justice system; and
2. **WHEREAS**, despite the prohibition of marijuana and the 22 million marijuana arrests that have occurred in the U.S. since 1965, including 757,969 marijuana arrests in 2011 alone, federal studies estimate that 42 percent of Americans have used marijuana, including over 18 million people who admit to having used it within the past month; and
3. **WHEREAS**, enforcing the costly and ineffective prohibition on marijuana drains limited resources that could be better spent on programs that more effectively serve the public and keep our cities safe from serious and violent crime; and

4. **WHEREAS**, the impact of these costs are felt particularly strongly on the local level due to the fact that 97 percent of marijuana arrests are conducted by municipal or state law enforcement; and
5. **WHEREAS**, the illegal market for marijuana is dominated by organized crime: The U.S. Department of Justice reports that Mexican cartels operate drug distribution networks in more than 1,000 U.S. cities and that “marijuana distribution in the United States remains [their] single largest source of revenue,” while drug policy and law enforcement officials, including former White House drug czar John Walters and former Arizona attorney general Terry Goddard, have estimated that cartels make as much as 60 percent of their profits from marijuana alone; and
6. **WHEREAS**, rates of marijuana sales and use are similar across racial and ethnic groups, but people of color are arrested, convicted, sentenced and incarcerated at higher rates and for longer periods of time; and
7. **WHEREAS**, during the 2012 election, Colorado and Washington State voters strongly approved measures to tax and regulate adult use of marijuana, while 18 states and the District of Columbia have passed laws legalizing marijuana for medical purposes and 16 states do not treat possession of small amounts of marijuana as a criminal offense; and
8. **WHEREAS**, several other states are considering reforms that will allow them to more effectively and responsibly control marijuana use and sales among adults in their jurisdictions in a way that reduces costs and crime and improves public health and safety; and
9. **WHEREAS**, federal law prohibits the use of marijuana for any reason, and federal agencies have regularly interfered with the operation of state medical marijuana laws – despite President Obama’s comments that such actions are “not a good use of our resources” and his administration’s pledge not “to circumvent state laws on this issue;” and
10. **WHEREAS**, a recent Gallup poll found that 64 percent of Americans believe that states should be able to reform their marijuana policies without federal interference; and
11. **WHEREAS**, The United States Conference of Mayors adopted a resolution at its 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting declaring the war on drugs a failure and calling for a health-centered reorientation of drug policy that gives “cities, counties and states the flexibility they need to find the most effective way to deal with drugs, save taxpayer dollars and keep their communities safe;” and

12. **WHEREAS**, The United States Conference of Mayors adopted a resolution at its 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting recognizing that, for many people, medical marijuana is the safest and most effective medicine to treat their conditions, including returning veterans suffering from PTSD, chronic pain or other service-related injuries and illnesses; and
13. **WHEREAS**, The United States Conference of Mayors adopted a resolution at its 80th Annual Meeting noting that the growing state-federal conflict on marijuana policies “frustrates our citizens, costs cities significant time and resources to address, and prevents the establishment of a regulated and safe system to supply patients” who may need medical marijuana; and urging the federal government to reclassify marijuana “so qualifying patients who follow state law may obtain the medication they need through the traditional and safe method of physician prescribing and pharmacy dispensing,”
14. **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that The United States Conference of Mayors reaffirms its support of fair and effective criminal justice and drug policies and reiterates its previous call for the reclassification of marijuana under federal law; and
15. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The United States Conference of Mayors recognizes that its members have differing views on how to treat marijuana in their cities, and believes that states and localities should be able to set whatever marijuana policies work best to improve the public safety and health of their communities; and
16. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The United States Conference of Mayors believes that federal laws, including the Controlled Substance Act, should be amended to explicitly allow states to set their own marijuana policies without federal interference; and
17. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that until such time as federal law is changed, The United States Conference of Mayors urges the President of the United States to reexamine the priorities of federal agencies to prevent the expenditure of resources on actions that undermine the duly enacted marijuana laws of states.

Projected Cost: Unknown