



September 23, 2019

Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Request to Sign SB 34 (Wiener)

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL TO Leg.Unit@gov.ca.gov

Dear Governor Newsom,

Americans for Safe Access is the nation's largest nonprofit dedicated to protecting the interests of medical cannabis patients, and more than two-thirds of our 100,000+ advocates call California home. On behalf of the thousands of medical cannabis patients in California, we urge you to sign SB 34 - Cannabis: Donations, which was introduced by Senator Scott Wiener.

SB 34 is critically important for improving patient access to medical cannabis. Many medical cannabis patients are on fixed incomes or receive their healthcare using some form of public assistance. Any additional costs on medical cannabis can be prohibitive. Patients are already burdened with the expenses of doctor visits and renewal fees if they choose to receive a medical cannabis identification card and may have to forgo medical cannabis itself if it becomes too expensive. In fact, when Americans for Safe Access conducted a survey of more than 500 medical cannabis patients, 88% indicated that the affordability of medicine was the biggest challenge they face.

In 1996, when California became the first state in the nation to develop a medical cannabis program, the program was centered around compassion and access to medicine, not commercialization. Unfortunately, since the passage of the Control, Regulate and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Act (AUMA), nonprofit medical operators have suffered the unintended consequence of being faced with a tremendous tax burden based on the amount of cannabis they distribute, even if it was given away for free. These taxes have caused many medical cannabis storefronts to shutter, resulting in a lack of affordable cannabis products for patients. After the passage of the AUMA, nonprofit providers can face



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ASA is the largest national nonprofit organization of patients, medical cannabis providers, medical professionals, scientists, and concerned citizens promoting safe and legal access to cannabis for therapeutic use and research, with over 100,000 advocates in all 50 states.



Advancing Legal Medical Marijuana Therapeutics and Research

taxes of up to \$1,000 per pound for the cannabis they distribute free of charge, even though they have no operating budget and are volunteer-run.

SB 34 works to rectify this problem by allowing patients with the least amount of resources to have access to medical cannabis and by exempting donated medical cannabis from certain state taxes, including the steep excise tax. We encourage you to sign SB 34 into law expeditiously as it will help countless individuals struggling with debilitating conditions.

Sincerely,

Americans for Safe Access



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