

National Policy Agenda for 114th Congress (2015-2016)

The top legislative Americans for Safe Access (ASA) in the 114th Congress is passage of the Compassionate Access, Research Expansion, and Respect States (CARERS) Act of 2015. The CARERS Act was introduced by Senators Booker (D-NJ), Paul (R-KY), and Gillibrand (D-NY) and Representatives Cohen (D-TN) and Young (R-AK) it is the most comprehensive piece of medical marijuana legislation to be introduced by Congress.

The CARERS Act addresses would fix many components of the state-federal conflict of medical marijuana laws by:

- Protecting patients, physicians, caregivers, and state-legal businesses of ending federal interference with state medical marijuana laws and those who abide by them
- Rescheduling marijuana out of Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA)
- Removing cannabidiol (CBD) from the CSA
- Lifting barriers to research, such as the DEA-imposed “NIDA Monopoly”
- Creating access to banking services for businesses operating under state laws
- Allowing access for veteran-patients by removing the “gag order” on V.A. doctors

The CARERS Act is supported by a wide range of organizations, including:

American Civil Liberties Union, Compassionate Care NY, Coalition for Medical Marijuana NJ, Drug Policy Alliance, Housing Works, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition, Marijuana Policy Project, MS Resources of Central New York, Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, New Jersey Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, NY Physicians for Compassionate Care, Parents Coalition for Rescheduling Medical Cannabis, Patients Out of Time, Students for Sensible Drug Policy, The American Cannabis Nurses Association, The Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester, Third Way, Veterans for Medical Cannabis Access, Veterans for Peace, and Veterans for Safe Access and Compassionate Care.

ASA works to support the CARERS Act through a combination of grassroots engagement and direct lobbying. Throughout the 114th Congress, ASA will be collaborating with House and Senate offices to host educational briefings for Congressional staff and is working to get the CARERS Act a legislative hearing in both chambers.

In addition to its work on the CARERS Act, ASA strives to include medical marijuana protections in various appropriations bills. While these measures do not create the complete and fully binding protection that the CARERS Act offers, the amendments help reign in the needless waste of resources combating safe a legal access. ASA's federal work also extends to the Executive Branch to help set policies that prevent the crackdown on state-legal medical marijuana conduct.

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