

The Honorable Cory Gardner  
United States Senate  
354 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senate  
317 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

June 7, 2018

Dear Senators Gardner and Warren:

We are writing to voice our support for the Strengthening the Tenth Amendment Through Entrusting States (STATES) Act of 2018. In 46 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam, individuals have access to some form of medical cannabis or products derived from medical cannabis. Americans for Safe Access represents the millions of medical cannabis patients with debilitating conditions around the country.

Despite the overwhelming majority of states allowing access to medical cannabis, there are still millions of patients with debilitating who live in conflict of federal law, protected only by a temporary annual appropriations rider. These patients include those who are suffering from conditions including but not limited to chronic pain, epilepsy, cancer and autoimmune disorders. These patients include veterans who are suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other injuries of war. The patients who are using medical cannabis are simply trying to find a way to live a better life. The STATES Act allows this better life to become a reality.

As you may be aware, many states have looked to the role medical cannabis can play in combating the opioid crisis. In January of 2017, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicines found that there is sufficient evidence that cannabis can be an effective treatment for pain management. Research has shown that in states with medical cannabis laws, there is a 24.8% decrease in opioid deaths, and in states in with regulated medical cannabis dispensaries, this decrease jumps to almost 40%. Further data has shown that state laws that regulate medical cannabis can lead to a significant reduction in prescription medications and an overall reduction in Medicare Part D costs. With 116 individuals losing their lives everyday to the opioid crisis, the STATES Act will allow states to utilize medical cannabis to help manage pain.

Jurisprudence from the Supreme Court has long indicated that states are the laboratories of democracy. *New State Ice Co. v. Liebmann*, 285 U.S. 262 (1932). Despite the prohibitions in the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. § 801 *et. seq.*), these states have created tightly regulated markets for the medical use of cannabis. In addition, to medical cannabis states have also expanded their endeavours to regulating the responsible adult use of cannabis for non-medical purposes. In some of these state markets, states have created programs so well regulated that it takes up entire chapters of the state's legal code.

We applaud the STATES Act for including an exemption that allows for the distribution or sale of cannabis to persons under the age of 21 for medical purposes. Many of the patients who benefit the most from medical cannabis and oils derived from the cannabis plant are minors who have not found relief to their condition from other therapies.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the goals of this legislation, and the goal of providing safe access to medical cannabis align. We thank you for bipartisan leadership and for your commitment to resolve this issue. It is our sincere hope that this legislation will serve as the foundation of and reinforcement for states crafting responsible and patient-focused cannabis policies.

Sincerely,

David Mangone, Esq., Director of Government Affairs  
Americans For Safe Access