

Dear Members of the Legislature,

I am 55 years old and a life-long Alaskan. I have had a serious chronic pain condition for 16 years. Marijuana can help with chronic pain. The marijuana legislation you have passed gives the appearance of making medical marijuana available without ACTUALLY making it available. I cannot legally buy marijuana anywhere. Likewise, I cannot legally buy marijuana seeds anywhere so that I can grow my own medicine. You pass a law that says I can grow it, but I can't legally obtain the seeds to grow it. Which means NO ACTUAL, LEGAL access to this medicine that could make my difficult life easier.

The federal government has lied to us for 60 years by telling us there are no medical benefits from the use for marijuana. It has also blocked research into diseases/conditions that could be helped by marijuana use, instead choosing to fund only research that will prove it is a dangerous. At the same time, the federal government provides marijuana to a few choice people to treat their conditions...with a drug they say has no medical value.

People undergoing cancer treatments are helped by marijuana, as are those with chronic pain, arthritis, epilepsy, migraine, glaucoma, Alzheimers, MS, Tourett's Syndrome, Muscular Distrophy and PTSD.

I'm supporting this measure because I think people like me should have easy access to medical treatment. I have used a pharmacy full of drugs over the years to treat my pain, none of which were effective long term and many which had terrible side effects. I should be able to go to an approved marijuana pharmacy and buy this drug. You shouldn't be asking me to break the law to gain access to treatment that can help me. I shouldn't HAVE to set up a grow room in my basement. We don't ask patients to grow their own antibiotics or blood pressure, asthma or arthritis medication. I shouldn't have to grow my pain medication.

People worry about teen access to marijuana if this law passes. Let me tell you, teens are about the only ones who have access to marijuana now. Look at how we treat alcohol and access. Teens don't go into liquor stores and bars and buy alcohol. It's pretty strictly controlled. And we punish business that sell alcohol to teens. We can control marijuana in the same manner. And if we control the sales of legal marijuana, it takes the profit out of the blackmarket sale of marijuana and our teens will have LESS access to it.

People worry about marijuana overuse if it is legally available to all adults. Marijuana is simply much less harmful than alcohol. You don't hear of women and children being beaten up by the man in their life who was stoned. Marijuana doesn't make you more aggressive. How many stories have we heard like this that were alcohol related? And yet we are willing to tolerate that and keep alcohol available. Because alcohol prohibition didn't work. Neither does marijuana prohibition.

How much of our prison population is in prison due to marijuana? In 2010, 81% of all drug arrests in Alaska were for marijuana possession. That's 8 in 10 arrests. We have had such an increase in our prison population that we ship our prisoners outside. How much would that

prison population and the cost of housing those prisoners shrink if we removed the prohibition on a substance that is LESS harmful than alcohol.

Our current policy and approach to marijuana simply makes no sense. I'm old enough to see the long-range effects of this approach and realize that it has made things worse for our citizens, rather than better. If the government has to intervene in my life, shouldn't that intervention make my life better?

I will be voting in support of this initiative and strongly encouraging all my friends and family members to do the same.

Beverly Frey

Fairbanks, Alaska