



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

May 16, 2017

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice and Science
U.S. House of Representatives
H-301 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable José Serrano
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Commerce Justice and Science
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Daniel T. Blue, JR
*Senate Democratic Leader
North Carolina
President, NCSL*

Raúl E. Burciaga
*Director
Legislative Council Service
New Mexico
Staff Chair, NCSL*

William T. Pound
Executive Director

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Serrano:

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) respectfully requests consideration and approval of fiscal year 2018 appropriations language restricting the Department of Justice from unnecessarily interfering with state marijuana laws. NCSL believes such a policy is consistent with federalism principals protecting states' abilities to govern, while ensuring the health and public safety of all Americans.

While NCSL supports a strong intergovernmental partnership to fight illicit drugs, we also maintain that where states have made a policy choice to regulate marijuana and hemp, the federal government should respect those state decisions. Currently, twenty-nine states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico allow for comprehensive public medical marijuana and cannabis programs. We recognize that states have differing views on how to treat marijuana, and believe states and localities are best able to determine what marijuana and hemp policies work best to improve the public safety, health, and economic development of their communities.

NCSL supports the inclusion of language in fiscal year 2018 appropriations laws that match section 537 of the "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017," rescinding DOJ funds used to prosecute states that wish to implement their own laws regarding the use, distribution, possession or cultivation of marijuana for medical purposes. We also support the same enumerated states right to use, distribute, possess or cultivate marijuana for recreational purposes.

In closing, we reiterate our support for the inclusion of this limitation on the Department of Justice. We appreciate the difficult task before you and appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

William T. Pound, Executive Director
National Conference of State Legislatures

CC: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

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