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# United States Senate

January 21, 2021

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AND FORESTRY  
ENVIRONMENT  
AND PUBLIC WORKS  
JUDICIARY  
SMALL BUSINESS  
AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Ms. Carol Olsen  
130 Northeast Aurora Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50313-3654

Dear Ms. Olsen,

Thank you for taking the time to contact me about legalizing marijuana. It is important for me to hear from folks in Iowa on policy matters such as this.

As you know, marijuana is classified as a Schedule I controlled substance, a label assigned by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to drugs which it deems have high abuse potential and no medicinal value. As such, the federal government prohibits the use and distribution of marijuana. In recent years however, 38 states, including Iowa, have taken action to legalize some form of marijuana usage.

I understand the arguments made in support of changing the way marijuana is regulated; however, I have concerns about outright legalization and the potential impact on drug abuse and addiction in our country, particularly as scientific experts still do not know all the ways marijuana affects the body and brain. Until the necessary evidence is available for the DEA to reclassify marijuana, I do not believe it should be made available for recreational consumption.

Additionally, I understand that a number of patients are struggling with chronic diseases and would like to see marijuana reclassified by the DEA to make it more accessible. I fully support reducing barriers that may currently exist to further study the medical use of marijuana and determine whether a reclassification would be appropriate, while still ensuring that the substance can be distributed in a safe, responsible, and controlled manner.

Please know that I will continue to keep your views in mind if this issue should appear before the full Senate. Feel free to reach out to my office with further information, as I always enjoy hearing from Iowans.

Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator

JE/mm

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