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United States Senate

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE EMERITUS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501

August 6, 2021

Mr. Carl Olsen
130 East Aurora Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50313-3654

Dear Carl Olsen,

Thank you for contacting me regarding your views on marijuana, and support for S.253, the Cannabidiol and Marijuana Research and Expansion Act. As your senator, it is important for me to hear from you on issues that are important to you. Please accept my apology for the delayed response.

I appreciate hearing your support for S.253, the Cannabidiol and Marijuana Research Expansion Act. You may be interested to know that Senator Feinstein and I, along with Senators Durbin, Tillis, and Ernst, introduced this legislation with the goal of this legislation is to ensure research on CBD and other potentially beneficial marijuana-derived substances is based on sound science while simultaneously reducing the regulatory barriers associated with conducting research on marijuana. In part, this legislation will allow research on CBD to be conducted using a Schedule II registration, rather than the more stringent Schedule I registration. Finally, the bill allows for the possession of non-psychoactive components of marijuana for the treatment of epilepsy, so long as a neurologist attests that the benefits of the substance reasonably outweigh the potential risks.

I hope to pass the CBD and Marijuana Research Expansion Act into law, because it will help continue the conversation beyond just one FDA approved drug. It will facilitate future legitimate medical research that can be done on CBD and marijuana that could lead to safe and effective drugs for patients.

Over the years, some people have expressed the view that marijuana should be legalized for recreational, medical, and agricultural purposes. However, I disagree with this view. Marijuana is illegal because it is dangerous. When you smoke marijuana, or use any other drug, it negatively affects your brain. It changes the way you think, your ability to learn, and how well you can remember. Legalizing marijuana will not change any of this. The laws granting the federal government the authority over these dangerous substances is well established and has been thoroughly reviewed by the courts.

Marijuana harms the brain's development. The National Institute on Drug Abuse warns that teen use of marijuana causes problems with memory and learning, perception, problem-solving, and coordination. Because of all the problems it causes, marijuana can also affect school and athletic

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performance. Although these problems are not unique to adolescents' use of marijuana, adolescents are particularly susceptible.

One concern in particular is the danger caused by driving while under the influence of marijuana. Marijuana slows motor functions and impairs spatial perception, which causes drugged drivers to cause serious sometimes fatal accidents. A study conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau reported that an estimated 38,000 high school seniors in the U.S. crashed while driving under the influence of marijuana. The issue of drugged driving and the effects of THC on operating a motor vehicle is relatively unclear, but the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) continues to study this issue and in 2017, released Marijuana-Impaired Driving: A Report to Congress, detailing their efforts. Other federal agencies, such as NIH and NIDA, are continuing to study the issue, and have compiled a number of studies that point to cannabis use increasing the risk of being involved in a motor vehicle accident. See <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/does-marijuana-use-affect-driving>.

Further, long-term marijuana use leads to addiction in some people. Many people develop a tolerance for marijuana and need more of the drug to get high. It has been linked to later abuse of other drugs in long-term studies, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Most people who use other drugs or abuse prescription drugs tried marijuana first.

Some have expressed that we should regulate marijuana in similar vein as we do alcohol and tobacco. Tobacco and alcohol, while legal, are still responsible for far too many premature deaths each year. Legalization of marijuana will not suddenly solve issues of use, abuse, and addiction for legal and illegal substances.

I will also follow-up with the DEA on your point about an exemption for marijuana under 21 C.F.R. § 1307.03 and seek further clarification for you.

Thank you again for contacting me. I hope you found this information helpful. And please keep in touch.

Sincerely,



Chuck Grassley
United States Senator

CEG/dh