



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

**Testimony Before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies: “2022 Member Day Hearing”**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Earl Blumenauer".

Chairman Cartwright, Ranking Member Aderholt, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. As states, territories, and tribes take action to address the failed and discriminatory War on Drugs, Congress has a responsibility to heed the public’s call for these reforms through the annual appropriations process. My top priority this Fiscal Year is language in the base text barring the Department of Justice (DOJ) from prosecuting those who comply with their state or tribal marijuana laws. I hope you will also maintain the current language barring DOJ from prosecuting those who comply with their state’s medical marijuana laws.

Congress has enacted appropriations language to protect the implementation and operation of state-legal medical marijuana programs for nearly a decade. Today, 37 states have enacted medical marijuana programs and 18 states have acted to legalize adult use programs--with eight of those states enacting adult-use programs since the start of 2020.

States from coast to coast, across the political spectrum, have taken meaningful action to end prohibitory policies and allow the development of both adult-use and medical marijuana programs. Most of these laws were decided by ballot initiatives. The federal government should not interfere with these programs and the will of the voters in each of these states.

DOJ interference in state- and tribal-legal marijuana is both unpopular and a waste of limited resources. U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said as much last month when testifying before the Senate Appropriations Committee: saying that DOJ prosecutions against those using marijuana in compliance with state, territory, or tribal laws is “not an efficient use of...resources.” At the same time, public support for ending the prohibition of marijuana is at an all-time high: 91% of U.S. adults agree that marijuana should be legal for medical and recreational use (61%) or medical use only (31%), according to the Pew Research Center. These protections for state and tribal programs have also passed on the House floor twice, each time with strong bipartisan majorities – in 2019 with a 267-165 vote and in 2020 with a 254-163 vote.

These provisions are crucial, popular steps in supporting the progress states have taken to address the wrongs of the failed and discriminatory War on Drugs. The American people are demanding a change to our outdated cannabis laws, and it is well past time that Congress heed their calls and ensure the protection of legal state, territory, and tribal cannabis reforms.