

**House Veterans Affairs Committee**  
**Full Committee – Legislative Hearing**  
**June 20, 2019**  
**Congressman J. Luis Correa (CA-46) – H.R. 712, VA Medicinal Cannabis**  
**Research Act**

Chairman Takano and Ranking Member Roe, thank you for the invitation to speak on my bipartisan bill: H.R. 712, the VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act.

I appreciate the chance to return to the House Veterans Affairs Committee, where I served in the last Congress, to speak on our urgent need for research on medical cannabis as a possible treatment option for our nation's veterans.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is uniquely positioned to pursue the necessary research on what cannabis can and cannot do for our veterans.

Our brave men and women return from military service in Iraq and Afghanistan, at times with psychological wounds as well as physical injuries.

Unfortunately, for many veterans with PTSD and chronic pain, the use of prescription opioids has been ineffective in providing relief.

Worse, the use of prescription opioids has led to addiction or even death.

Tragically, VA patients are almost twice as likely to die from accidental opioid overdoses than non-veterans.

In California, I have met with multiple veterans who use medical cannabis as an alternative to prescription opioids and other treatment methods.

The men and women that I meet back home vouch for the therapeutic benefits of medical cannabis and support further research into the issue.

In fact, according to the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, over 90 percent of their membership support medical cannabis research.

As more veterans use cannabis for medical purposes, it is important that doctors be able to fully advise on the potential benefits and effectiveness of medical cannabis.

Currently, VA doctors can discuss cannabis usage with patients, but they have limited federally approved research on which to base recommendations or clinical opinions.

For that reason, with my colleague and friend Congressman Clay Higgins of Louisiana, I introduced the VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act.

The bill requires the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct a double-blind clinical study on the safety and effectiveness of medical cannabis.

The legislation provides a framework for that research to ensure a scientifically-sound study on the issue.

Research on the safety and effectiveness of medical cannabis is timely, necessary, and supported by the veteran community.

I want to thank the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, and many others for their support of the bill.

H.R. 712 is a pragmatic and sensible approach to the need for research on medical cannabis and could result in potentially lifesaving information.

I look forward to working with you all to move this bill forward.