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**\* \* \* PRESS RELEASE \* \* \***

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## **Councilmembers Support Enhanced State Standards on Medical Marijuana Dispensaries, Legislation to End Federal Raids**

*Councilmembers Huizar and Zine introduce resolutions Friday calling for tougher state guidelines to ensure proper regulation of dispensaries; another resolution supports legislation outlawing raids in states with medical marijuana policies*

**LOS ANGELES (July 17, 2009)** – Councilmembers José Huizar and Dennis Zine introduced a resolution today supporting legislation that would further enhance the state standards for medical marijuana dispensaries, including state licensing of such facilities and stronger disciplining of medical practitioners who give out medical marijuana irresponsibly, including over the phone or in cases where there is no documented health need.

The Councilmembers also introduced another resolution supporting state legislation that asks the federal government to end raids on medical marijuana dispensaries in states where voters have approved its use. Both resolutions were seconded by Councilmember Janice Hahn.

“We have to tackle the issue of medical marijuana on all fronts,” said Councilmember Huizar. “Our cities and states need to have a fair, balanced approach when dealing with medical marijuana to ensure that those patients who truly need it have safe access, while ensuring that our communities are not unfairly burdened by the negligent actions of bad medical practitioners and dispensary operators.”

Huizar and Zine were among the first councilmembers to address the fact that medical marijuana dispensaries were opening up illegally and evading enforcement. Huizar's investigation determined that the City's hardship exemption clause in the Interim Control Ordinance was effectively a giant loophole – preventing the City from pursuing enforcement against the hundreds of dispensaries cropping up all over the City.

Councilmember Huizar introduced City legislation in April to strike the hardship exemption clause from the Interim Control Ordinance and requested that the City begin hearing hardship exemption cases immediately. Council voted to strike the hardship exemption provision from the ordinance last month and have since heard and denied dozens of such applications.

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