



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

CONTACT:

Jessica Tarman
Communications Director
213-473-7003/213-276-2093
jessica.tarman@lacity.org

Resolution Passed in Council to Support SJR 20 Asking the Federal Government to Recognize the Medical Marijuana Laws of California

(Los Angeles) – Today, the City Council approved a Resolution (Zine-Hahn-Rosendahl) that calls for support of California State Senate Joint Resolution 20, which asks the President and Congress to enact legislation to require the DEA and all Federal agencies and departments to respect the compassionate use laws of states and to return all assets seized from medical marijuana dispensaries to the states from which they were confiscated. SJR 20 also requests Federal law enforcement to enforce Federal medical marijuana laws in a manner consistent with the laws of the State of California.

Approved by voters in 1996, California Proposition 215, the Compassionate Use Act, exempts patients and caregivers from certain criminal penalties when they possess or cultivate marijuana for medical use as recommended by a physician. The California Compassionate Use Act is in conflict with the federal Controlled Substance Act (CSA) of 1970. The CSA deems it illegal to possess, obtain, or manufacture marijuana. Since last year, the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has conducted 28 raids on medical marijuana dispensaries in California, closing locations and seizing property and assets.

In order to achieve clarity in this debate and end the conflict between the CSA and the California Compassionate Use Act, SJR 20 was introduced in the California State Senate. SJR 20 asks the President and Congress to enact legislation to require the DEA and all Federal agencies and departments to respect the compassionate use laws of states and to return all assets seized from medical marijuana dispensaries to the states from which they were confiscated. SJR 20 also requests Federal law enforcement to enforce Federal medical marijuana laws in a manner consistent with the laws of the State of California. Resolution (Zine-Hahn-Rosendahl) resolves that the City of Los Angeles support SJR 20.

“Our goal is to bring the sale of medicinal marijuana under control and regulated by a City entity so that distribution is safe and accessible to people that truly need medicinal cannabis to improve their quality of life,” said Councilman Zine, a member of the Public Safety Committee. “We are calling on the Federal Government to permit the State of California and the City of Los Angeles to carry out the will of the voters.”

"The citizens of California have spoken loud and clear that medical cannabis should be available to sick patients," said Councilwoman Janice Hahn. "At a time when local, state and federal governments are facing budget shortfalls government should not be spending money taking medicine away from sick people."

"This is a total misuse of federal power and resources," said Councilmember Bill Rosendahl. "The DEA should not be hunting down medical providers or chasing sick people who need relief from their pain. This is another outrageous byproduct of the bad drug laws of the 1980s."

The Resolution will now go to the Mayor for concurrence.

###