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Honorable Mayor Foster and Council Members

Banning all medical marijuana dispensaries in Long Beach would be tantamount to closing all of the pharmacies and drug stores because of prescription drug abuse. As a nation, we seem readily able to tolerate the ever-growing misuse of physician prescribed medications but vilify a much safer herbal compound. Meds issued by pharmacies are estimated to kill over 700,000 Americans every year, yet there has not been one documented death from medical cannabis.

One of the myths touted as a reason to close these clinics is that they create crime. In fact, a recent independent Rand study handily proved otherwise. The report was so profound that political forces who have a vested monetary interest in perpetuating this myth put pressure on Rand to squash it. The reality is that should a ban be enacted, the juvenile gangs will be more than happy to step up to the plate with regulation becoming an impossibility.

I often hear naïve suggestions that the patients should grow their medicine, in their own backyards. Imagine yourself one day receiving the news from your doctor that you have cancer and may only have a few months to live--you must begin chemotherapy in a week. How will you have the resources, expertise, energy and time to grow the medicine that you will need? What if you live in an apartment? What if you are just too sick or disabled? How can you force a plant to grow to maturity in a week? The whole concept is absurd.

Until the Long Beach City Council is ready to close all of the pharmacies and drug stores, the bars and liquor stores, the tobacco and convenience stores that sell alcohol and tobacco, it is ludicrous for them to ban the medical marijuana dispensaries. For the patients who are ill and/or disabled, it would be cruel and inhumane.

Instead, the Council needs to work with the clinics and citizens to find a rational solution and reasonable regulations. In addition, they must petition the state of California to fulfill their obligation in this arena—"to implement a plan to provide for the safe and affordable distribution of marijuana to all patients in medical need of marijuana," as declared in the Compassionate Use Act of 1996.

Peace be with you,

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Working to make the World a better place,

diana

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