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Subject: ADA Access to Medical Marijuana - Public Comment

January 7, 2013

Dear Mayor and City Council

The Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted in 1990. It provided citizens with disabilities equal access to public facilities and services. In the spirit of the ADA, I want to especially commend **Dr. Suja Lowenthal** and the others on this Council who had the compassion to understand the critical need of people who are sick and/or disabled to access medical cannabis.

However, limiting medical marijuana dispensaries to LB industrial zones is tantamount to displacing all of the pharmacies 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 kill over 100,000 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 fairly 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 what amounts to be a partial ban be enacted, the juvenile gangs will be more than happy to step up to the plate making regulation 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, it is ludicrous for them to target the medical marijuana dispensaries. For the patients who are ill and/or disabled, it is cruel and inhumane.

Instead, the Council needs to work with the clinics and citizens to find a rational solution and reasonable regulations. **All Districts should allow access to their constituents in need.** Limiting distribution to industrial areas severely restricts access and potentially places patients in harm's way.

In addition, this body must aggressively petition the state of California to fulfill their obligation —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,
Diana Lejins
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*Working to make the World a better place,
diana*