

Dear City Council

I am speaking today on the medical marijuana dispensary issue as the Mayor plans to deny the public their right to speak on Feb 14. Refusing the public their due process on this matter only serves to diminish citizens' impassioned pleas. A great deal of time has passed and it's not that difficult to forget someone else's pain and suffering when you're not personally involved.

So, I am imploring you to review the heartfelt testimony given last year on this subject when the Council first considered it. And, please remember that the few souls brave enough to bare their personal suffering here in this Council chamber represent many others who might be too sick or disabled or just plain afraid to speak at the dais before you.

Your personally-biased City Attorney and Mayor would have you believe that you cannot regulate these dispensaries. This is simply not true. While some parts of the original ordinance are not viable, most will be able to withstand scrutiny. If you recall, it was Mr. Shannon who originally brought you the ordinance that was struck down by the courts. **Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me!**

The stats given by our Police Chief at the last meeting were incomplete and skewed. Even the Police Chief of Los Angeles reported that the dispensaries attract no more crime than banks. In fact, there were about twice as many robberies at banks—so do we close down all of the banks?

If you recall in earlier testimony given by Joan Greenwood, the entire State of Maine has a system that is operating quite well. There are many other cities and states that have regulations in place that do not present a problem. Fifteen other states and Washington DC now allow for medical marijuana. **Certainly, the City of Long Beach can find a reasonable solution.**

More than likely, **a ban on dispensaries would only drive patients to the streets and put them at extreme risk buying from drug dealers.** The product could be laced with an addictive substance or may be tainted with deadly molds or other pathogens that would be especially devastating to those with immune-compromised illnesses such as AIDS. Are you willing to take responsibility for their untimely deaths?

Forcing them to buy from gang-affiliated dispensers would only fund and enable larger and more powerful cartels. With an already-drained police department and a dramatic spike in non-related shootings over the past few months, is empowering gangs/cartels a wise path to follow?

It is imperative that this City Council create a viable alternative to outright banning of medical marijuana dispensaries, not only for the patients that use this medicine now but for all citizens (including yourselves or loved ones) that may one day need it to treat their pain and/or medical condition.

Yours truly

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