



U.S. Department of Justice
Drug Enforcement Administration

Office of the Administrator

Springfield, Va 22152

November 30, 2010

The Honorable Charles Grassley
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Grassley:

This responds to your letter of November 29, 2010, in which you submitted additional questions for the record following my confirmation hearing. The responses to your questions are set forth below:

(1) In response to question 4(a) regarding whether you “support efforts to decriminalize or legalize the use, production, or distribution of marijuana, for medical purposes or otherwise,” you stated that you, “support the Administration in its clear and steadfast opposition to legalization of marijuana.” As the administrator of the DEA you would be in the position to direct DEA’s resources to combat illegal drug trafficking, including targeting marijuana production and distribution. In order to clarify your response on efforts to decriminalize or leave certain portions of the Controlled Substances Act unenforced, I want to know specifically what your position is in regard to decriminalization of marijuana.

- a. Do you believe marijuana should be decriminalized for individual use? If so, under what circumstances should individual use be decriminalized? What quantities of individual use would you support?

I remain concerned with any actions that would lead to increased use of substances of abuse and therefore, do not support decriminalizing the cultivation, distribution, and use of marijuana for any purpose other than legitimate research.

- b. Do you believe production and growing of marijuana should be decriminalized? If so, under what circumstances should the growing, cultivation, and production of marijuana continue without intervention of federal law enforcement? Please provide specific examples of situations where you would favor the decriminalization of the production and growing of marijuana.

I remain concerned with any actions that would lead to increased use of substances of abuse and therefore, do not support decriminalizing the cultivation, distribution, and use of marijuana for any purpose other than legitimate research.

- c. Do you believe distribution and sale of marijuana should be decriminalized? If so, under what circumstances should the sale and distribution of marijuana be decriminalized? What quantities of marijuana would you favor decriminalizing the sale of distribution of? Please provide specific examples where the distribution and sale of marijuana should be decriminalized

I remain concerned with any actions that would lead to increased use of substances of abuse and therefore, do not support decriminalizing the cultivation, distribution, and use of marijuana for any purpose other than legitimate research.

- (2) Your response to question 4(b) states that you "support the Administration's commitment to enforce the CSA in all states....I remain concerned with any state actions that attempt to legalize schedule I controlled substances and believe that state legalization efforts lead to increased substance abuse." While I appreciate your opposition to state based efforts to legalize any schedule I substance, I also want to know your views on state based efforts to decriminalize schedule I substances. Do you support state based efforts to decriminalize any schedule I substance? If so, please indicate what types of decriminalization efforts you would support, including a list of substances, at what quantities decriminalization would be supported, and whether you support the decriminalization of individual use, distribution, or production.

I remain concerned about the message that "decriminalization" sends to the public, including to our youth. By definition Schedule I controlled substances are: drugs or other substances having a high potential for abuse; drugs or other substances having no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States; and drugs or substances lacking accepted safety for use under medical supervision.

I do support legitimate research involving these substances and believe that any change relative to controls of substances should be made pursuant to the scheduling process established by the Controlled Substances Act.

Sincerely,


Michele Leonhart
Acting Administrator