

Letter: Sick people should not fear government

To the community,

When my friends and I wrote and passed The Compassionate Use Act, otherwise known as Proposition 215, we never, in our worst nightmares, could have imagined that 17 years after its historic passage, medical marijuana patients would still be living in fear.



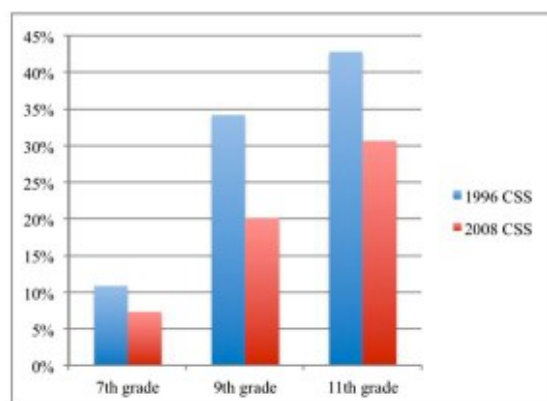
Steve Kubby

During all those years I've seen countless sick people arrested, humiliated, bankrupted, indicted, prosecuted like common criminals, and sent off to prison for decades at a time, all over a healing herb. I've also seen the exhausted faces of patients who must endure long rides, sometimes through dangerous blizzard conditions, because they have run out of the strain of cannabis that works best for them and are forced to travel to the Bay Area to get their preferred strain of medicine and the real relief it provides for them.

Right now, here is South Lake Tahoe, there are sick people who live in constant fear that the city will come in unannounced, turn off their power, fine them \$1,000 per day and leave them to die. They live in terror of low flying aircraft, especially helicopters, convinced that they are about to be discovered and evicted. They avoid going out into public and hide in their homes and apartments instead. Yes, they are horribly

sick and living in fear each day.

You don't ever see them, or hear from them, but I do. Some have obvious disabilities, others appear to be fine, but are in terrible pain and suffering. Most of all, however, they are in fear that enforcers from the city will find them, issue demands they can't meet, shut off their power and destroy their lives.



California Youths' Past Six-Month Marijuana Use (from 1996 to 2008)

Source:
*California Attorney
General's Office*

Regardless of how you or anyone else feels about marijuana, I think we can all agree that genuinely sick people do not deserve to live in daily fear of their city government.

Sadly, there are those who just don't understand and choose to spread falsehoods instead. Don't believe the nonsense about how our initiative "will result a pot store on every street corner." It's just phony propaganda by a small minority of opponents. Even the city attorney had to remove his comments about "Unlimited Dispensaries" and issue a new title and summary.

Only those who have been residents for over a year in South Lake Tahoe can qualify to operate a dispensary. And the City Council retains the right to ban signage or ban new dispensaries after six months. So don't buy into the hype and

propaganda that people are making up about this compassionate attempt to provide safe access for patients who genuinely need this extraordinary medicine.

In order to protect dispensaries, we also created a clause about making it a crime to conspire with federal authorities to violate state medical marijuana laws. The city attorney balked at approving this clause, alleging that this is an illegal attempt to prohibit the police from enforcing marijuana laws, but we are firmly convinced that it is just the opposite and our initiative is intended to force police to uphold our state medical marijuana laws instead. We know that 99 percent of the federal raids on dispensaries begin with some local official or officer contacting the DEA and telling them that their local government or police have been unable to legally ban or evict certain dispensaries. So from our perspective, it is vital that we have a clause that upholds state medical marijuana laws, by making it a crime to conspire with federal agents intent upon violating state laws.

On Monday, I spoke with the city attorney about our objections to the title and summary he issued which included allegations such as "prohibits police from enforcing marijuana laws" and "allows for unlimited dispensaries." After a frank exchange of views, the city attorney then issued a second title and summary Dec. 9 that removed these fraudulent claims about our initiative.

Of course, there are those who will assert that dispensaries will mean more weed ending up in the hands of kids. That is certainly the claim that the drug czar, Barry McCaffrey, made after the passage of Prop. 215. These are the haters and bigots who want us to believe that throwing kids caught with weed into a jail cell with sexual predators and hardened criminals is the answer to our drug problems.

Now, more than 17 years after the passage of California's Prop. 215, a considerable body of data exists on teen use of

weed and the evidence is clear. No state with a medical marijuana law has experienced an overall increase in youth marijuana use since the law's enactment. All have reported overall decreases – in some cases exceeding 50 percent in specific age groups – strongly suggesting that the enactment of state medical marijuana laws does not increase teen marijuana use. See details [here](#).

So don't pay attention to the vocal minority who oppose us and try to paint medical marijuana as some sort of fringe issue. The fact is that every national poll done, including by Fox News, shows 80 percent support for medical marijuana. Here in South Lake Tahoe, voters supported legalization in 2010 with a whopping 58 percent "yes" and a pathetic 42 percent "no".

The time has come to ignore those who tell you that South Lake Tahoe doesn't want medical marijuana in our community because this town clearly supports the medical use of cannabis and we have the polls to prove it.

Watch and you will see that those who oppose medical marijuana have no real arguments and must rely instead upon personal attacks against me instead.

With this in mind, my team and I will begin collecting signatures this week, in order to give voters a chance to stop the city from threatening sick people and protect them instead.

Steve Kubby, South Lake Tahoe