

PETITION OF THE PEOPLE OPPOSING BILL C-15 MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCING BILL FOR DRUG OFFENCES

We, the undersigned, as concerned citizens and voters, lend our signatures to this petition to voice our shared concern and opposition to Bill C-15, the Mandatory Minimum Sentencing Bill currently in Senate.

We ask the Members of Senate to not pass this Bill until the following issues are addressed:

PATIENTS, WHO ARE ILL OR LIVING WITH SERIOUS DISEASES, THAT USE MEDICAL MARIJUANA ARE AT RISK.

Despite claims by Bill C-15's supporters that it does not target medical marijuana users, there is actually no protection for

medicinal marijuana patients. In fact, it is likely that ill people who use medicinal marijuana will be negatively impacted, since less than half of 1 percent of the estimated medicinal cannabis users in Canada hold federal exemptions. Many ill medicinal users grow cannabis without a federal license or depend on a Compassion Club. Cultivators for Compassion Clubs could be sentenced to mandatory prison terms for growing and supplying the cannabis that sick people living with serious or terminal illnesses rely on.

THIS WILL CAUSE IRREVOCABLE HARM AND THREATEN THE RIGHTS, HEALTH AND FREEDOM OF CANADIANS WHO DO NOT DESERVE IT.

While this Bill purports to target organized crime, the inclusion of cannabis cultivators growing

more than five plants means that this Bill will ensnare many Canadians who are neither violent nor connected with organized crime in any way.

THE MAJORITY OF CANADIAN SOCIETY SUPPORTS DECRIMINALIZING MARIJUANA. THIS BILL GOES AGAINST THE WISHES OF THIS MAJORITY.

Maclean's Magazine's nation-wide "What We Believe" poll in 2006 found 62% of Canadians support legalizing the recreational use of marijuana and 93%

approve of the medicinal use of cannabis. More people than ever are agreeing that decriminalization is the best strategy to deal with drug addictions and drug-related crime and health issues, such as the successful model established by Portugal since 2001.

AMPLE EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT MANDATORY MINIMUMS DO NOT WORK.

Evidence from the U.S. shows that the use of Mandatory Minimum Sentences failed to diminish the amount of drug use and drug-related crime in any measurable way. Instead, the U.S.

imprisoned a record number of its own citizens for non-violent drug offences. The 2002 report by the Department of Justice (Canada) on the effects of Mandatory Minimums concluded that MMS are ineffective in reducing crime compared to the elevated prison and court costs and that "incarcerating occasional, non-violent offenders, for substantial periods, constitutes a colossal waste of justice system resources."

RESOURCES WILL BETTER SERVE SOCIETY BY BEING DIRECTED TOWARDS IMPROVING TREATMENT RATHER THAN PUNISHING PEOPLE.

We should put our resources into prevention, treatment and harm reduction where we can help heal and re-integrate people with addictions, not traumatize them further with imprisonment.

Treatment-oriented approaches are more cost-effective than prison terms. Given the financial recession and the recognition that our prison and court systems are already overburdened and overcrowded, is this really our society's priority--to spend taxpayers' money putting and keeping non-violent cannabis cultivators in prison?

**WE JOIN TOGETHER IN CALLING UPON THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE
TO MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE AND BE REMEMBERED FOR TAKING A STAND ON THESE ISSUES!
CANNABIS CULTIVATION DOES NOT DESERVE IMPRISONMENT!!
DECRIMINALIZATION OFFERS SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF PROHIBITION!!
LET'S JOIN THE 21ST CENTURY AND SOLVE THE INCREDIBLE HEALTH & SOCIAL CRISIS
OF ADDICTION BY IMPROVING TREATMENT, NOT METING OUT PUNISHMENT!!!**



*Issued by the BC Compassion Club Society (BCCCS)
registered non-profit since 1998*

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Upon completion of this page, please return to the BC Compassion Club to be collected and presented to the House of Senate: BCCCS, 2995 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V5N 4C8