

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0533

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 20, 2015

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

Throughout the country, states are increasingly turning away from marijuana prohibition and enacting alternative policies to lower crime rates, free up limited law enforcement resources, and keep drugs out of the hands of children. To date, four states have legalized recreational marijuana, and 23 states now allow marijuana for medical use. There has also been a great deal of movement on the science behind marijuana, and consequently, the marijuana policy landscape in Congress has shifted to more closely match the needs of the states we represent.

We write to you concerning House Amendment 296 to H.R. 2578, the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016. This commonsense amendment targeted \$9 million dollars in the Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program in the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) budget and redistributed it to three accounts that play a far more useful role in promoting the safety and economic prosperity of the American people: the Violence Against Women Act Youth-Oriented Program, the Victims of Child Abuse program, and the Spending Reduction Account. This amendment passed on voice vote without any opposition from either party. We urge you to include the substance of this amendment in any upcoming spending legislation, whether through a continuing resolution or an omnibus spending bill.

The Cannabis Eradication program's sole mission is to eradicate marijuana plants and arrest growers. However, historical data indicates that the vast majority of plants seized under this program are wild plants descendent from industrial hemp. They are not intentionally grown, and they are not suitable for recreational or medical use. Therefore, the seizure of these plants has served neither an economic nor public-safety nor a health-related purpose. Its sole impact has been to expend limited federal resources that are better spent elsewhere.

Despite both the programs' proven ineffectiveness and the seismic shift in attitudes on marijuana policy within Congress and across our nation, the DEA continues to spend millions of taxpayer dollars on its Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program, spending \$18 million in 2014 alone. There is no justification for spending this kind of money on an antiquated program never shown to be effective.

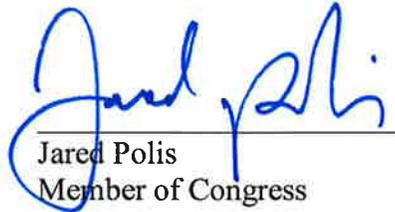
This is a reasonable and measured amendment, in line with previous Congressional action. The language contained in this amendment, supported by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Congress, is an important and needed step forward to cut waste from our federal budget and focus our limited resources on programs have proven to be effective at preventing violence, assisting children who have been victimized, and promoting public health.

Thank you for your consideration, and we hope you will support this request.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



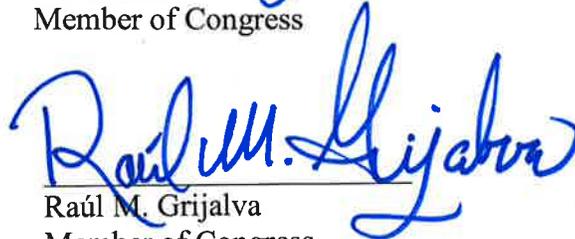
Michael Honda
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Beto O'Rourke.

Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress

Sam Farr

Sam Farr
Member of Congress