

## NEWS RELEASE: Arkansans for Medical Cannabis

"Today we met with a focus group of regular people who are mainstream, middle of the road, mid-life to retirement aged individuals who have no personal stake in this issue," Robert Reed, spokesman for Arkansans for Medical Cannabis, explained one approach his group is using to refine the model legislation they intend to submit for passage to the 2011 Arkansas General Assembly.

"We asked today's focus group several questions," said Reed. "But their response to one was most interesting. We asked them what they thought the biggest challenge or objection was to passing a medical cannabis law. They all said it is the social stigma and prejudice that seems to overwhelm common sense."

Stigma aside, according to a 2001 poll conducted by the University of Arkansas, 63% of respondents favored legal access to medicinal cannabis. Nationally, according to ProCon.org, ten other polls between 2002 and 2009 have shown public endorsement of therapeutic access to consistently range between 57% and 74%. And according to an ABC News & Washington Post poll conducted in January of this year, 81% of Americans support allowing doctors to decide when to prescribe cannabis.

Adding to this momentum, clergy from Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, Disciples of Christ, Church of God, United Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal and Baptist congregations have endorsed the Interfaith Drug Policy Initiative's statement of principle which reads: "Licensed medical practitioners should not be punished for recommending the medical use of marijuana to seriously ill patients, and seriously ill patients should not be subject to criminal sanctions for using marijuana if the patients' medical practitioners have told them that such use is likely to be beneficial."

"Medicinal cannabis use is an issue of mercy, compassion and common sense," said Reed. "And the Bill we have drafted, the Arkansas Medicinal Cannabis Act of 2011, will enable medicinal use of cannabis by Arkansans, freeing them from fear and penalty of interdiction."

Reed also explained that the proposed legislation does not set-up any sort of dispensary system. "Dispensaries have proven problematic in other states. That's why we're limiting this legislation to one single issue. To implement a 'good Samaritan' law that protects those who use cannabis for medical purposes. To safeguard them from persecution."

For more information, visit Arkansans for Medical Cannabis on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Arkansans-For-Medical-Cannabis/406969176256> or contact Robert Reed, [a4mc@gmx.com](mailto:a4mc@gmx.com) ~~~