



NAACP

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St. Louis NAACP President Endorses Amendment #2

Marijuana and racism have long been intertwined, dating back to the post-Prohibition era in the 1930s when the country's first drug czar gained traction for his war on marijuana by invoking a fear of black people. In the 1970s, President Richard Nixon's war on drugs targeted black people, as well as hippies. History is replete with how officials used cannabis prohibition to target and criminalize black and brown people and throw them in jail.

The NAACP is well aware of the frustration that the wealth being generated in the other states where marijuana is legal is not reaching people of color. The broader legalization of Medical Marijuana in Missouri is a social justice issue, but only if it is linked to some type of effort to make sure members of minority communities are able to participate in the cannabis industry as growers and sellers, not just workers. Amendment #2 and its backers (New Approach Missouri) offers the best opportunity for such.

The impact and dangerous side effects of opioids and painkillers are well documented and continually ruin lives in Missouri. Medical marijuana is empirically proven as a safe and effective alternative to opioids and painkillers. But right now, doctors and patients aren't allowed to consider this option when making a personal healthcare decision.

The broader use of Medical marijuana as pharmacotherapy in Missouri is long overdue. It's no secret that after reviewing the pertinent scientific data and applying the principle of double effect, there is a proportionate reason for allowing physicians to prescribe medical marijuana. Seriously ill patients have the right to effective therapies. To deny patients access to such a therapy is to deny them dignity and respect as persons.

Amendment #2 represents a safe, responsible, and patient-centric way forward for Missouri to become the 31st state to allow medical marijuana. Amendment #2 is about putting health decisions back in the hands of patients and their doctors, allowing medical marijuana use under the supervision and expertise of doctors, not government bureaucrats.