



JOHN CHIANG
TREASURER
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

December 20, 2017

Dear Members of the California Congressional Delegation:

California is days away from ringing in the New Year and with it the fulfillment of a historic vote that ushers in the legal sale of cannabis for adult recreational use.

Voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 64. And now state and local governmental bodies, following the will of voters, are acting to ensure it is implemented.

As you know, California has long been a national leader in the effort to decriminalize cannabis and destigmatize its medicinal use. It may be hard to believe, but the state's first vote on decriminalization took place 46 years ago. It has been 22 years since voters passed Proposition 215, conferring upon California the distinction of becoming the first state to legalize the medicinal use of cannabis.

Today, 29 states have legalized medical cannabis. These states represent a true cross section of America and demonstrate the national reach and consensus that has begun ineluctably changing societal attitudes and state laws governing the legalization of cannabis.

The federal government continues to be slow to catch up with the times. As a result, businesses that are now legitimate in the view of more and more states nevertheless go on suffering economic injury and threats to public safety because our banking system fears reprisal under antiquated federal drug laws.

At least law abiding citizens with access to medical cannabis have been able to rest easy – until now.

As you know, since 2014, Congress has approved the Rohrabacher-Farr Amendment which prohibits the use of federal funds to prevent states from implementing their own laws that allow for the use, cultivation, distribution, or possession of medical cannabis. Recently renamed the Rohrabacher-Blumenauer Amendment, this clear-sighted, pragmatic, and fair provision ensures that states and their citizens who have voted to legalize medical cannabis are not subject to federal prosecution when they act in compliance with state law.

It is time to renew this promise and allay any fears of the citizens of California and the other 28 states. Without this legislation, which is set to expire Friday, the hands on the clock of progress would spin counterproductively backward.

Clearly, the wisest course for Congress is to recognize this unstoppable groundswell of popular support that continues to build across the nation. I look to the California delegation to support, indeed even champion, the Rohrabacher-Blumenauer Amendment.

My only regret is that we are not immediately also extending similar protections to cover those involved in the commercial sale of cannabis for adult recreational use. I trust we can accomplish that next – and soon.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Chiang", is written over a large, stylized blue scribble that resembles a signature or a large flourish.

JOHN CHIANG
California State Treasurer