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Sent: 12/26/2015 11:13:10 AM

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Cc:

Subject: The Federal Government is acting like they Care for Citizens! Fire Chief Keel of SLED and let S.C. Citizens march forward to better life!

<<http://www.marijuana.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/elizabeth-warren.jpg?dc83c3>>

U.S. Senators Press Federal Agencies on Medical Marijuana Research

<<http://www.marijuana.com/blog/news/2015/12/u-s-senators-press-federal-agencies-on-medical-marijuana-research/#comments>>

By [Tom Angell](http://www.marijuana.com/blog/news/author/tangell/) <<http://www.marijuana.com/blog/news/author/tangell/>> on December 22, 2015

A group of eight U.S. senators, led by Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, is [demanding answers](http://www.warren.senate.gov/?p=press_release&id=1039) <http://www.warren.senate.gov/?p=press_release&id=1039> from key federal agencies about why the government hasn't yet enacted policies to better facilitate scientific research into the medical benefits of marijuana.

"There are currently numerous federal and state regulatory barriers to researching marijuana," the lawmakers wrote in a letter on Monday. "This regulatory scheme which limits medical marijuana research is outdated and in desperate need of serious and immediate review. These problems are only exacerbated by a lack of coordination between the agencies and states."

The letter, addressed to the heads of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), reveals that those agencies provided a staff briefing for the Capitol Hill offices last month, but that it "failed to answer key substantive questions."

The senators are concerned about a number of issues in particular:

- The monopoly on cultivating cannabis for research currently maintained by the University of Mississippi, which, they write, “limits access to adequate supply and appropriate varieties of marijuana and presents significant barriers to research.”
- The lawmakers want a detailed breakdown of how much of each strain of marijuana is grown at the university and how much of each strain is being requested by researchers.
- They also want to know if there is a plan to add permits for additional growers, something that the head of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) recently testified before a Senate panel “would be beneficial.”
- They point out that countries like the United Kingdom, Canada, Israel, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Portugal and Uruguay all allow more than a single source to grow cannabis for research while still complying with United Nations drug control conventions, refuting a DEA argument that the U.S.’s current supply monopoly stems from treaty obligations.
- Revising marijuana’s current classification under the Controlled Substances Act in Schedule I, a category that’s supposed to be reserved for drugs with no medical value.
 - The senators cite evidence that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has already made a recommendation about rescheduling but that DEA has not yet acted on that recommendation. The letter gives no indication about what FDA’s recommendation is, but presses DEA to provide a timeline for acting on the evaluation.
 - The letter also asks whether DEA has separately asked FDA to analyze possible reasons for rescheduling cannabidiol (CBD), a component of cannabis that has shown promise in treating severe seizure disorders in children.
- Interagency coordination to better facilitate marijuana research. The letter reveals that ONDCP is holding regular meetings on the topic with various federal agencies, but says, “We continue to hear from the research community that the research application approval process is long, cumbersome and difficult to navigate.”
 - The lawmakers want a detailed overview of all steps in the application process for researchers who want to study marijuana, “including all steps at the DEA, FDA and local Institutional Review Boards, from initial application to receipt of marijuana from NIDA, including data on how long the entire process has taken for previously approved applications.”
- Surveillance and epidemiological studies on the use of medical marijuana in the U.S. “This should also include investigations in diverse populations and