



**Illinois
Cannabis
Patients
Association**

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New Jersey becomes 14th medical cannabis state

On January 11, the last day of its lame duck legislative session, the New Jersey Legislature voted overwhelmingly to pass medical cannabis legislation that will protect seriously ill patients from arrest and regulate the distribution of their medicine.

The Assembly voted 48-14 to pass A. 804, which was amended to reflect compromise language drawing from the previous Assembly bill version and a broader bill that had passed the Senate last year. The Senate then also voted to pass A. 804, 25-13. The bill will go into effect six months after Gov. Jon Corzine's (D) signature. This is an incredibly exciting development for patients in New Jersey and across the country, and represents the culmination of a long year's worth of work by New Jersey patients and advocates.

In another significant development, on November 10 the American Medical Association (AMA) called for a review of cannabis' Schedule I narcotic status. This brings the AMA's position much more in tune with current sentiments in the medical, scientific and academic communities with regard to the efficacy of medical cannabis. In 2008, the prestigious American College of Physicians called for a review of cannabis' scheduling. Numerous other organizations support removing criminal penalties from medical cannabis, including the American Nurses Association, the American Academy of HIV Medicine, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, and the American Public Health Association.

According to a 2008 Mason-Dixon poll, **68% of Illinois registered voters support doctor-approved access to medical cannabis**, and more than 1,000 Illinois physicians, 1,000 Illinois nurses, the Illinois Nurses Association, and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago also support access to this medicine for those who are suffering from a serious and debilitating condition.

Some newspaper editorial boards that have endorsed the need for a medical cannabis program in Illinois include the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Rockford Register Star*, *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, *Peoria Journal Star*, *State Journal Register*, *Jacksonville Journal Courier* and *Moline Dispatch*.

Furthermore, medical cannabis is now legal under the laws of 14 states and Washington D.C., and the Obama administration has issued guidelines not to interfere with states that have passed medical cannabis laws. The Illinois House of Representatives needs to pass **SB 1381**, the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Act, because patients are not criminals.

The Illinois Cannabis Patients Association – because patients are not criminals