



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

09-27-2002

**Canadian Cannabis Coalition Response to the Special Senate Committee Report on Illegal Drugs**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT

**Western Canada:**

Philippe Lucas (250) 381-8427

Rielle Capler (604) 875-0448

**Eastern Canada:**

Tim Meehan: 416-854-6343

(additional contacts listed below)

This release is also available in HTML and PDF formats

HTML: <http://cannabiscoalition.ca/senatepr.htm>

PDF: <http://cannabiscoalition.ca/senatepr.pdf>

The Canadian Cannabis Coalition (CCC), a national umbrella organization for stakeholders in cannabis-related organizations, products and services, applauds the visionary recommendations of the Special Senate Committee on Illegal Drugs, especially in regards to the legalization of cannabis. The report is a major advancement toward a harm reduction-based cannabis policy, which acknowledges that the harms and benefits of cannabis can best be dealt within a legal, regulated and controlled environment.

Through rigorous research and analysis of the many models of drug policy practiced around the world, the Senate Special Committee has acknowledged the failure of cannabis prohibition, which serves only to advance black-market criminal interests, while criminalizing a large proportion of the population (around 600, 000 Canadians currently have criminal records for personal possession of cannabis) for behaviour that is not inherently dangerous to the self, or to others.

The CCC has been a vocal critic of the new Marijuana Medical Access Program. As such, it was of particular interest that the Senate Special Committee had many of the same concerns that we had long expressed. The Senate found that "The MMAR are not providing a compassionate framework for access to marijuana for therapeutic purposes and are unduly restricting the availability of marijuana to patients who may receive health benefits from its use".

The recommendations and findings that are of particular interest to some of our members are:

- Measures should be taken to support and encourage the development of alternative practices, such as the establishment of compassion clubs
- No attempt has been made in Health Canada's current research plan to acknowledge the considerable expertise currently residing in the compassion clubs
- Health Canada should, at the earliest possible opportunity, undertake a clinical study in cooperation with Canadian compassion clubs
- The qualities of the marijuana used in those studies must meet the standards of current practice in compassion clubs, not NIDA standards
- Consider viewing marijuana as a natural health product, like other herbs and plants
- People who smoke marijuana for therapeutic purposes prefer to have a choice as to methods of use

Additionally, Health Canada has recently announced the formation of the long overdue Medical Marijuana Advisory

Committee. Although the CCC boasts some of the most experienced and knowledgeable medicinal cannabis users, researchers, suppliers and pioneers in Canada, we have been denied representation on the committee.

While we applaud the Senate's report for its compassionate and rational recommendations, we would like to point out some areas that could be improved:

- The report calls for a declaration of amnesty for any person convicted of possession of cannabis under current or past legislation. The CCC further recommends that amnesty be extended to anyone convicted of nonviolent growing and distribution cannabis offenses under current or past legislation.
- The CCC is opposed to any form of forced treatment for cannabis users. Those who are arbitrarily deemed excessive users must not be forced to undergo treatment by a Drug Treatment Court or any other agency.
- While the Senate shows great concern for the health of the many Canadians who use cannabis, these concerns could be better addressed with attention to the quality standards of the cannabis being produced. Higher potency cannabis will lead to smaller amounts being consumed, and organically grown cannabis tested for molds, mildews and fungus will result in a healthier product being consumed. Such standards will greatly reduce any health risks associated with cannabis use and will put the onus on the producer rather than on the consumer.
- When considering cannabis use and driving, we suggest that impairment is the only valid concern as opposed to the operation of a vehicle under the influence of this substance if one is not impaired. Thus testing should be for impairment, not for substance use.
- The CCC welcomes the Senate's recognition that the label of "drug abuse" is arbitrary and incorrect. At the same time, we do have concerns that some other language of the report, such as arbitrarily defining "at-risk" and "excessive" use at over and under one gram of consumption per day respectively, is counter-productive. Many Canadians, particularly, medicinal users, consume in excess of several grams of cannabis per day without any harm to themselves or others.
- The recommended National Advisor on Psychoactive Substances and Dependency might better be called the Advisor on Psychoactive Substances, until there is a better understanding of dependency and the connotation is less pejorative. The recommended national fund for research on psychoactive substances should also fund research on the beneficial effects of such substances on humans.

Finally, on the same day that the Senate released its Final Report - September 4, 2002 - the DEA raided the most respected medical cannabis dispensary in the United States, The Wo/men Alliance for Medical Marijuana (WAMM); literally grabbing medicine out of the hands of the sickest, weakest, most vulnerable of its citizens. In Canada, the last month has seen both the Toronto Compassion Centre (1200 members) and the Sunshine Coast Compassion Society (70 members) raided by police, resulting in closure of the clubs. This callous, indefensible police response to the suffering of some of Canada's sickest citizens must also end.

To avoid further accusations of callousness or negligence, the government must act to implement the recommendations of the Special Senate Committee on Illegal Drugs with the CCC's additions, immediately.

For our part, we will continue to press the issue through the criminal and civil courts, the political process, education via print, web and electronic publishing, and civil disobedience, until the situation is remedied.

Canada is a modern, educated, and compassionate country; it is time for our drug laws to reflect logic and common sense. It is time to end the war on responsible Canadian cannabis users. It is time for a drug peace.

□

## The Canadian Cannabis Coalition

## Contact Info

( Stakeholders wishing to speak to the media about this Press Release have added their contact info )

Bloc Pot - Montreal, Que.	□
British Columbia Compassion Club Society (BCCCS) - Vancouver, B.C.	(604) 875-0448
British Columbia (B.C.) Marijuana Party Vancouver, - B.C.	□
Bubble Bags - B.C.	□
Canadian Action Coalition	□
Canadian Media Awareness Project (CMAP) - Victoria, B.C.	□
Canadian Medical Marijuana Association	□
CanEvolve Facilitators - Calgary, Alta	□
Cannabis As Living Medicine (CALM) Toronto, Ont.	416-367-3459
Cannabis Culture Magazine - Vancouver, B.C.	□
CannabisLink.ca	deb@cannabislink.ca

<a href="#">Cannabis Research Institute (CRI) - Grand Forks, B.C.</a>	□
<a href="#">Clay, Chris</a>	<a href="mailto:cclay@greenghost.biz">cclay@greenghost.biz</a>
<a href="#">Club Compassion de Montreal Montreal, Que.</a>	□
<a href="#">Compassionate Cannabis Club - Sturgeon Falls, Ont.</a>	<a href="mailto:maryhuanamike@hotmail.com">maryhuanamike@hotmail.com</a>
<a href="#">Crosstown Traffic Ottawa, Ont.</a>	□
<a href="#">Dopefiends/ Sexy Stoner Bookstore</a>	□
<a href="#">Family Action Coalition Toward Sensible Solutions</a>	□
<a href="#">Grand Forks Hemp Company - Grand Forks, B.C.</a>	□
<a href="#">Heads Magazine - Hudson, Que.</a>	□
<a href="#">Hedron Analytical Inc. - Richmond, B.C.</a>	□
<a href="#">Hemp Depot - Ottawa, Ont.</a>	□
<a href="#">Holy Smoke Culture Shop - Nelson, BC</a>	□
<a href="#">London Cannabis Compassion Centre - London, Ont.</a>	□
<a href="#">Mama Indica's Hemp Products - Tofino, B.C.</a>	□
<a href="#">Med Marijuana Inc. - Bedford, Nova Scotia</a>	□
<a href="#">Medical Marihuana.ca - Duncan, B.C.</a>	□
<a href="#">Nelson Cannabis Compassion Club - Nelson, B.C.</a>	□
<a href="#">NORML Canada - Abbotsford BC</a>	□
<a href="#">Northern Lights Hemp Company</a>	□
<a href="#">Odd Duck Herbal Research Farms - Richmond, B.C.</a>	□
<a href="#">Ontario Consumers for Safe Access to Recreational Cannabis (OCSARC)</a>	<a href="mailto:tim@ocsarc.org">tim@ocsarc.org</a> 416-854-6343
<a href="#">(The) Open Minder - Grand Forks, B.C.</a>	□
<a href="#">Parti Marijuana Party du Canada -Montreal. Que.</a>	<a href="mailto:info@marijuanaparty.org">info@marijuanaparty.org</a>
<a href="#">Potshot - Vancouver, B.C.</a>	□
<a href="#">Pot-TV - Vancouver, B.C.</a>	□
<a href="#">Renee Boje</a>	□
<a href="#">Sacred Herb - Victoria, B.C.</a>	□
<a href="#">Sunshine Coast Compassion Club Society - Gibsons, B.C.</a>	□
<a href="#">Tarzan's Hemp Company □ - □Sturgeon Falls, Ont.</a>	<a href="mailto:maryhuanamike@hotmail.com">maryhuanamike@hotmail.com</a>
<a href="#">Toronto Compassion Centre (TCC) - Toronto, Ont.</a>	□
<a href="#">Toronto Hemp Company (THC) - Toronto, Ont.</a>	□
<a href="#">Vancouver Island Compassion Society (VICS) - Victoria, B.C.</a>	<a href="mailto:phil@thevics.com">phil@thevics.com</a>
<a href="#">West Hemp (B.C.) Cooperative</a>	□
<a href="#">Women's Cannabis Collective</a>	□

#### Global Affiliates

Hemp Lobby Organization - Washington State

□

Washington Hemp Education Network - Washington State

□

Ecology - Australia

□

-30-

Cited:

The Wo/men Alliance for Medical Marijuana (WAMM): <http://www.wamm.org/>

Toronto Compassion Club: <http://www.torontocompassioncentre.org/>

Sunshine Coast Compassion Society: <http://www.sunshinecoastcompassionclub.org/>

Other Atrocities:

Michael Patriquen: <http://www.railroaded.info/>

Terry Parker Jr.: <http://www.geocities.com/terryparkerjr/>

The Senate report is available at:

[http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/Committee\\_SenRep.asp?Language=E&Parl=37&Ses=1&c\\_omm\\_id=85](http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/Committee_SenRep.asp?Language=E&Parl=37&Ses=1&c_omm_id=85)

For further information about the Canadian Cannabis Coalition, visit <http://cannabiscoalition.ca/> or contact: [ccc@cannabiscoalition.ca](mailto:ccc@cannabiscoalition.ca)

P.O. Box 1481  
Grand Forks, B.C.  
VOH 1H0

[ccc@cannabiscoalition.ca](mailto:ccc@cannabiscoalition.ca)

[Home](#)

[Participants](#)

[Newsletter](#)

[Minutes](#)

[Feedback](#)

[News](#)

[Chat](#)

[Links](#)