

The Compassionate Access, Research Expansion, and Respect States (CARERS) Act

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Medical marijuana is legal in 30 states and the District of Columbia, where lawmakers recognize medical research showing cannabis can alleviate symptoms of serious conditions, including epileptic and seizure disorders in children, cancer, and glaucoma. Currently, there are 46 states with some form of medical marijuana law. However, medical marijuana remains illegal under federal law, leaving patients and providers vulnerable to arrest—even if they are in compliance with their state laws. Additionally, because of its classification as a Schedule I drug and other administrative barriers, marijuana is extraordinarily difficult to research compared with other drugs. This bipartisan bill would allow Americans to gain access to the care they need and respects states' decisions to enact laws that allow their citizens to access medical marijuana free from federal interference.

Compassionate Access, Research Expansion, and Respect States (CARERS) Act

(1) Recognize States' Responsibility to Set Medical Marijuana Policy & Eliminate Potential Federal Prosecution

The *CARERS Act* amends the Controlled Substances Act so that states can set their own medical marijuana policies. The patients, providers, and businesses participating in state medical marijuana programs will no longer be in violation of federal law and vulnerable to federal prosecution.

(2) Allow States to Import Cannabidiol (CBD), Recognized Treatment for Epilepsy and Seizure Disorders

The *CARERS Act* amends the Controlled Substances Act to remove specific strains of CBD oil from the federal definition of marijuana. This change will allow youth suffering from intractable epilepsy to gain access to the medicine they need to control their seizures.

(3) Provide Veterans Access

Current law prohibits doctors in Department of Veterans Affairs facilities from prescribing medical marijuana. The *CARERS Act* would allow VA doctors in states where medical marijuana is legal to recommend medical marijuana to military veterans.

(4) Expand Opportunities for Research

The *CARERS Act* removes unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles for researchers to gain government approval to undertake important research on marijuana and creates a system for the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to encourage research.

The federal government is lacking woefully behind the majority of states when it comes to how it treats medical marijuana. It is time we recognize the medical value of cannabis and respect the decisions of states that have made progress on the issue.

Endorsed by:

American Civil Liberties Union, Americans for Safe Access, Compassionate Care NY, Drug Policy Alliance, MS Resources of Central New York, NY Physicians for Compassionate Care, the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester, Third Way, and Veterans for Safe Access and Compassionate Care