



# Maine Community Youth Assistance Foundation

2720 S. River Rd., Suite 128 Des Plaines, Illinois 60018 ♦ 847-858-7090 ♦ [www.mcyaf.com](http://www.mcyaf.com)

February 24, 2010

Dear Editor:

This is in response to the letter in the February 18, 2010 edition of the Pioneer Press regarding Senate Bill 1381 about legalizing marijuana for medicinal purposes in the State of Illinois. I am the Director of MCYAF, the Maine Community Youth Assistance Foundation, a community coalition in Maine Township.

I am not writing to debate whether cannabis should be used for medicinal purposes. I am writing to share our coalition's view of the legislation and to educate our community about the dangers of the proposed legislation as written.

**If approved, this bill will allow large amounts of an unmonitored and unregulated drug in our community and provide access for our youth to an illegal drug.** Supporters of SB 1381 frame the issue around the need to decriminalize marijuana use for terminally ill patients, providing them a safe and legal path to their medicine. However, there are major gaps in the bill, particularly the lack of controls.

In the proposed bill, each person with a prescription can possess six cannabis plants but only three mature plants for a 60-day period. In just two months, three mature plants can produce 1,764 joints -- or the equivalent of 29 joints per day.

**An influx of marijuana into our neighborhoods could likely mean a higher number of youth using marijuana.** The top five states in the nation with the highest percentage of kids age 12 – 17 using marijuana in the past month are all medical marijuana states. The top four states in the nation with the highest rates of new marijuana users aged 12 -17 are also medical marijuana states. Are we OK with our kids going down this road?

**Medicinal cannabis should be dispensed through legal medical dispensaries such as pharmacies,** as is the practice with other prescribed medications. Our coalition partners are united on this issue.

If we say nothing, we can expect to see marijuana plants growing in neighbors' backyards, marijuana dispensaries popping up in storefronts, and a real potential for increased crime and substance abuse among our youth.

**Use your voice and step up now before Senate Bill 1381 becomes law in Illinois and threatens our environment and health.** I urge you to share this information with your local and state representatives, neighbors, family and friends. If you would like more information, please contact me at 847-858-7090 and watch [www.mcyaf.com](http://www.mcyaf.com) for more details. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'M. Polovchak'.

Margaret Polovchak  
Director  
Maine Community Youth Assistance Foundation (MCYAF)