

**RESOLUTION: 2014 Update to Marijuana Policy in NC**  
**NORTH CAROLINA DEMOCRATIC PARTY - New Hanover County Convention - April 5, 2014**

Whereas, in 2012, the New Hanover County Democratic Party adopted a Resolution to 1) The End of the “War on Drugs”, 2) Treat Drug Abuse as a Healthcare Matter, and 3) End Marijuana Prohibition. Since then, considerable policy, public health and medical evidence supports our Resolution and strengthens our voice to speak out on this issue.

Whereas, Pew Research (4/2/2014) reports a broad majority (7/ 10) of Americans want to significantly reduce the role of the criminal justice system in dealing with drug users, and fewer than 2/10 Americans support the continued prohibition of marijuana for medical uses. Of note, 7/10 Americans consider alcohol to be more harmful to individual and public health than marijuana and more than 75% believe that marijuana legalization is inevitable. In 2014, other polls report the majority of NC voters support legal medical marijuana; and for the first time, only a minority opposes legalizing marijuana for responsible adult use in NC.

Whereas, research and clinical evidence since 2012 further confirms the therapeutic benefits of cannabis (marijuana) in the treatment of a wide variety of diseases and conditions, with a risk profile lower than most FDA approved substances.

Whereas, despite continued federal prohibition based on the (false) premise that marijuana has no medical use and is among the most dangerous substances, the government continues to issue patents to major pharmaceutical companies to market future cannabis based medicines, and billions of dollars have been invested outside of NC to research and develop cannabis products.

Whereas, at least 20 states and the DC now have legal medical marijuana programs, now covering most US citizens, but leaving citizens living in NC completely vulnerable to arrest and criminal prosecution.

Whereas, since 2012, prescription and illicit drug overdose has become a major public health problem, and now overdose deaths surpasses automobile accidents as the leading cause of accidental death in the US. By comparison, marijuana is nontoxic and cannot cause death by overdose; and states with legal medical marijuana programs have lower rates of death by overdose than states that prohibit using medical cannabis.

Whereas, in 2012, Colorado and Washington voters legalized marijuana, directing their states to regulate it in a manner similar to alcohol, with more states expected to follow this model. To date, there is no spike in crime or related negative effects, and expected state revenue significantly exceeds early estimates.

Whereas, in NC, in 2013, the Republican controlled legislature stopped a medical marijuana bill (HB84) because they deemed it too annoyingly popular (they received more comments endorsing this than other pending legislation). They branded the bill with a rare “Unfavorable”, preventing further consideration of this legislation throughout the 2013-2014 Session.

Whereas, in 2014, CNN medical correspondent and neurosurgeon, Sanjay Gupta, MD, exposed the tragedy of withholding cannabis as a potential life changing treatment for children with seizure disorders. Cannabis oil has had remarkably promising results in patients in states and countries where allowed. Consequently, families from NC are relocating to these legal havens to seek humane, cannabinoid-based treatment.

Whereas, hemp, the same plant as marijuana but without any psychoactive properties, is an agricultural commodity that produces food and fiber, and could offer excellent economic and environmentally sustainable opportunities for farmers and manufacturers in NC. In 2006, the Democratic controlled legislature passed a law, signed by the Governor, enacting an Industrial Hemp Commission to develop rules for this planned NC hemp industry. However, since then, the Republican controlled legislature refused to staff or fund the Hemp Commission, effectively ending this process before it began.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the citizens who affirm this RESOLUTION urge our elected representatives, our candidates, and our platform to reflect the will of the people and reform NC and US marijuana and drug laws. The first step should be the immediate end of prosecution of medical users of marijuana. The second step should fund and staff the NC Industrial Hemp Commission of 2006 to ensure this effort moves forward.

AND WE ARE FURTHER RESOLVED to see the passage of federal and state legislation that will regulate cannabis in a workable distribution model, similar to those used to control alcohol. Until such time that cannabis can be a regulated, legal substance in NC, we urge that enforcement of marijuana laws in NC be a lowest law enforcement priority.