

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you seek out a replacement for retiring Drug Enforcement Administration Director Michele Leonhart, we encourage you to use this as an opportunity to reshape the DEA's direction to reflect your administration's enforcement priorities.

We appreciate the efforts you and your Department of Justice have made to provide states with latitude to establish their own marijuana laws. Unfortunately, Director Leonhart leaves behind a legacy of strident opposition to efforts to reform our nation's drug policy. The next DEA Administrator must be willing to work with state and federal officials to set drug enforcement priorities that make sense within the evolving landscape of state marijuana laws.

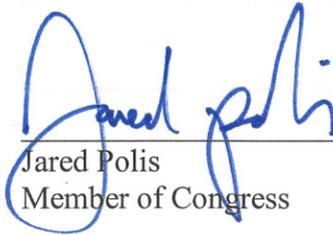
Under Director Leonhart's leadership, the DEA placed far too great an emphasis on prosecuting state-legal marijuana activity, as opposed to prioritizing more dangerous drug-related activity like that relating to meth, cocaine, heroin and other opiates. Ms. Leonhart's misplaced priorities placed a great strain on legitimate marijuana businesses operating under state law, and exacerbated problems with our nation's criminal justice system, which too often penalizes nonviolent drug users with prison time. Rather than discourage marijuana use, such prosecutions make defendants more likely to experience poverty and unemployment and drive Americans to do business with criminal cartels who lack any incentive not to exploit their customers or market products to children.

The DEA plays a critical role in promoting the health and safety of Americans. But to succeed in its mission, it must refocus its efforts on cracking down on bad actors who seek to evade state laws rather than those who abide by them. All of us share a commitment to keeping drugs out of the hands of children, diminishing the reach of criminal cartels, and helping individuals who are addicted to drugs find the help they need to turn their lives around. To accomplish these aims, the DEA must end its resistance to the changing public consensus on marijuana use and stop

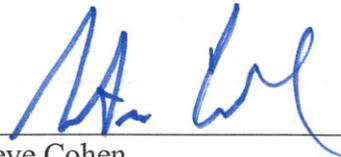
expending its limited resources to prosecute individuals who are not a threat to public safety and, instead, focus on drug activity that poses a more serious risk.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues, and we look forward to working with you to set national drug enforcement priorities that respect the will of state voters and keep our communities safe.

Sincerely,



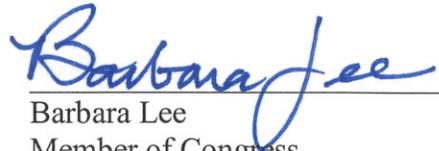
Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
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Barbara Lee
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Sam Farr
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Eric Swalwell
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