

Veterans Action Council Announces Limited Support for: The Veterans Medical Marijuana Safe Harbor Act

Veterans need access to medical cannabis in all 50 States, federal properties and territories, without reprisal of any kind

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, November 17, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Veterans Action Council (VAC) announces limited support for Sen. Brian Schatz' (D-HI) legislation, "The Veterans Medical Marijuana Safe Harbor Act" (Safe Harbor Act). The legislation is also known as S. 1183, H.R. 2588, and as [S.Amdt. 4464](#). This legislation was added to the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act ([FY22 NDAA](#)) as SEC. 1071. Safe Harbor For Use By Veterans Of Medical Marijuana on November 4, 2021.



VAC offers only limited support for the Safe Harbor Act due to its overly pragmatic and limited nature. However, VAC looks forward to continued work with Sen. Schatz' office and beginning relationships with more legislative offices interested in drafting progressive policies for veterans, cannabis, and entheogens.

The Safe Harbor Act would allow veterans in states or Indian Tribal Jurisdictions with medical marijuana programs to use, possess, and transport medical marijuana within their respective legal states or Indian Tribe Jurisdictions.

The difference between the current laws and The Safe Harbor Act is that veterans in states or Indian Tribal Jurisdictions with medical cannabis programs would no longer be breaking the federal Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 801 et seq.) or other federal laws.

Further, the Safe Harbor Act permits Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) physicians to recommend and complete forms for the use of medical cannabis for veterans, respective of their state or Indian Tribe medical cannabis laws.

Current VA policy does not permit VA doctors to formally recommend medical cannabis or provide certifications for such use, even within states, and Indian Tribe's jurisdictions, where veterans use is otherwise legal.

While VA physicians may legally discuss their patient's medications, current discussions between veterans and VA physicians are limited because any positive comment by a VA doctor could be construed as a recommendation.

Lastly, the Safe Harbor Act includes "SEC. 1072. Studies On Use Of Medical Marijuana By Veterans." This piece of the legislation instructs the VA to study the effects of medical marijuana on veterans in pain. The legislation proposes a start date and quantifies funding; however, it does not specify an end date.

The VA already researches medical cannabis and veterans. However, the VA has not released information from its current patient data regarding veterans and medicinal cannabis use, nor has the past or current research gone far enough to elucidate the data the medical and veteran communities require.

VAC Group Concerns

Veterans in all 50 States, territories, and while on federal property, must have full access to safe and affordable medical cannabis. The Veterans Medical Marijuana Safe Harbor Act (S. 1183/H.R. 2588/S.Amdt. 4464) recognizes the epidemic facing our Veterans and the clear evidence of the benefit of medical cannabis to our Veterans.

However, the legislation is too limited in scope as it does not go far enough to grant Veterans access to medical cannabis in states or Indian Tribal Jurisdictions, without their own programs.

The Safe Harbor Act does not specify end dates or specific quantifiers for the research. The VAC recommends more specific language be written to prevent the Department of Veterans Affairs from avoiding action.

The piecemeal approach of these and similar initiatives, while perhaps an important incremental action, is grossly insufficient to meet current needs. The Safe Harbor Act and similar initiatives leave too many of our nation's veterans behind, a situation our military veterans have endured for far too long.

While we offer only limited support, we agree this initiative is a necessary step in the right direction. Our issues are that it simply does not do enough. We look forward to working with

lawmakers who are willing to propose more progressive reforms for medicinal access to entheogens for our nations' service members.

Interested legislative offices are encouraged to contact the VAC via email at VeteransActionCouncil@gmail.com or through VeteransActionCouncil.com

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About Veterans Action Council:

The Veterans Action Council (VAC) is an all-volunteer group of Veterans and venerated professionals in our respective fields. We came together to promote and coordinate efforts on veterans' access to alternative treatments and therapies, thereby promoting the physical health and mental well-being of Veterans and their families.

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