

DEBRA BOWEN

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

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Drug Decriminalization Initiative Enters Circulation

Marijuana. Repeal of Criminal and Civil Penalties. Release from Jail. Statute.

SACRAMENTO – Secretary of State Debra Bowen today announced that the proponents of a new initiative may begin collecting petition signatures for their measure.

The Attorney General prepares the legal title and summary that is required to appear on initiative petitions. When the official language is complete, the Attorney General forwards it to the proponents and to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State then provides calendar deadlines to the proponents and to county elections officials, and the initiative may be circulated for signatures. The Attorney General's official title and summary for the measure is as follows:

MARIJUANA. REPEAL OF CRIMINAL AND CIVIL PENALTIES. RELEASE FROM JAIL. STATUTE. Decriminalizes possession, cultivation, transportation, distribution, and use of marijuana or hemp. Provides persons convicted or serving time for non-violent offenses involving marijuana be immediately released from prison, jail, parole, or probation, and be eligible to have their convictions erased. Provides no permit, license, or tax be required for non-commercial cultivation, transportation, distribution, or consumption of marijuana. Allows doctors to prescribe or recommend marijuana to patients, regardless of age. Prohibits testing for marijuana for employment or insurance purposes. Bars state from aiding enforcement of certain federal marijuana laws. Summary of estimate by Legislative Analyst and Director of Finance of fiscal impact on state and local government: Savings in the several tens of millions of dollars annually to state and local governments, which would no longer incur the costs of incarcerating and supervising certain marijuana offenders. A potential increase of a few million dollars annually in the cost of the state's Drug Medi-Cal substance abuse treatment program. (Initiative 07-0064.)

The Secretary of State's tracking number for this measure is 1296 and the Attorney General's tracking number is 07-0064.

The proponents for this measure, Jack Herer, Charles E. Lepp, George Clayton Johnson, Phyllis Vonderscher, Ronnie Lee Smith, Michael S. Jolson, and Seeva Marie Cherms, must collect signatures of 433,971 registered voters – the number equal to 5% of the total votes cast for governor in the 2006 gubernatorial election – in order to qualify it for the ballot. The proponents have 150 days to circulate petitions for this measure, meaning the signatures must be collected by April 24, 2008.

The initiative proponents can be reached at 2889 Indian Hill, Clearlake Oaks, California 95423. No phone number was provided.

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