



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 16, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson,

Yesterday, you may have seen the front page of the New York Times featured an article titled “Nixon Started the War on Drugs. Privately, He Said Pot Was ‘Not Particularly Dangerous.’” This is a devastating public admission of a devastating public policy. For 50 years, the Schedule I classification of cannabis has inflicted generational harm on Black and Brown communities who have suffered from the deliberate and disproportionate enforcement of criminalization. It confirms what we have known for years, but we have never heard it in Nixon’s own words before.

The revelation comes just days after former President Trump announced support for adult-use of cannabis in his home state and would back easing federal restrictions on cannabis reforms if re-elected. Likewise, Vice President Harris has long supported rationalizing our nation’s approach to cannabis. With both party leaders in favor of commonsense reforms and the revelation that the President who started the war on drugs never found cannabis dangerous, it is clearly past time for Congress to act. I strongly encourage you to bring bipartisan cannabis legislation to a vote as soon as possible.

To date, 38 states have enacted medical marijuana programs, including 24 states that have legalized adult use. States across the political spectrum are voting for cannabis reform. Congress must catch up. Twice now, the MORE Act has passed the House of Representatives. Additionally, there is strong bipartisan, bicameral support to provide state-legal businesses access to standard financial services. Further, just months ago, the House moved to allow veterans to access medical marijuana programs in states where it is legal. These are examples of policies that could easily clear the House if you simply bring them to the floor for a vote.

As we approach the government funding deadline, it is clear we will need to remain in Washington to keep the government open. What remains unclear is what we will vote on while you continue to negotiate to resolve the budget impacts. I would suggest moving policies that, instead of further dividing us, makes a difference for the American people, including for our veterans, law enforcement, small businesses, and more.

It's never too late to do the right thing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Earl Blumenauer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Earl" being more prominent than the last name "Blumenauer".

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress