

THE MEDICAL CANNABIS ORGAN TRANSPLANT ACT

AB 258

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SUPPORT

Location: SENATE

Sponsored by Americans for Safe Access

Patients who test positive for cannabis (marijuana) use are routinely denied a place on the organ transplant waiting list – even if they are using legal doctor-recommended medical cannabis in accordance with California law. This widespread practice at hospitals and transplant centers is based on outdated policies that classify legal cannabis use as “drug abuse.” Legal patients have died after being denied an organ transplant based solely on their use of doctor-recommended medical cannabis, and others are at risk right now.

AB 258 will reduce unnecessary suffering and preventable death. It prohibits anyone in the decision-making process from blocking an organ transplant based on the potential recipient’s legal medical cannabis use, unless a doctor has determined that medical cannabis use is clinically significant to the transplant process.

- California law already protects patients with mental and physical disabilities from discrimination in the organ transplant process. AB 258 extends that existing protection to legal medical cannabis patients.
- Six other states that allow medical cannabis use already protect patients from discrimination in the organ transplant process: Arizona, Delaware, Illinois, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Washington.
- There is no federal or state law or regulation that would prevent a legal medical cannabis patient from receiving an organ transplant.
- The California Medical Association unanimously approved Resolution Number 114-16 in December, opposing blanket restrictions of potential organ transplant donors and recipients based solely on reported or detected cannabis use.
- Research shows that the active therapeutic constituents of cannabis have beneficial immunosuppressive and anti-inflammatory effects which may prolong graft survival in transplant patients. There is no association between cannabis use and lower survival rates.

AB 258 is a compassionate, commonsense approach to ensuring fundamental fairness in the organ transplant process. The responsible, law-abiding medical cannabis patients who need an organ transplant are among the sickest and most vulnerable in the population. They urgently need equal access to life-saving organ transplants.

AB 258 will reduce unnecessary suffering and preventable death, while increasing survivorship in the organ transplant process. Those are goals that lawmakers, doctors, and constituents can all stand behind. Visit www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/ab_258 for additional information about the bill, victims, scientific research, and more.

