



Senator Kenny Yuko
25th District

Ohio Senate
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 466-4583

September 7, 2016

Dear Local Government Officials,

The legislation that creates a medical marijuana program in Ohio goes into effect tomorrow, September 8th. While working on this legislation and talking to Ohioans about medical marijuana, I heard compelling testimony about the good that this medicine can do. I also saw skeptics' attitudes change.

I understand that some local governments are concerned about what exactly this law will mean for their citizens. Out of respect for our cities and townships, lawmakers included significant local control in the bill. Local governments do have the option to regulate the number and kinds of cannabis businesses that can be licensed within their communities.

That being said, I urge local governments to carefully consider all information before making any decisions for your citizens about medical marijuana.

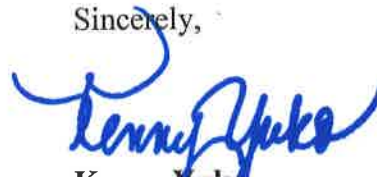
1. **Consider the economic opportunities.** I don't know a single community that couldn't use another entrepreneur with a business plan and the ability to fill a need for the area's residents. Whether you represent a farming community, a commercial area, a suburb or an urban center, it is quite possible you have constituents who are considering starting a medical marijuana-related business. These businesses would employ community members, put money in their pockets and get them spending in your area. If you ban medical marijuana businesses in your town, these automatically become missed economic opportunities.
2. **Listen to your constituents.** Speaking with people in the community is precisely how I came to learn about the many studies that show medicinal cannabis can greatly improve quality of life for patients who are suffering. Now it's your turn to listen to your residents' concerns and hopes. I encourage you to provide an ample public comment period before taking any action regarding medical marijuana in your community. Allow people to speak or write to you, especially if you are considering a moratorium. Listen to the needs of the aged, the disabled, and everyone who could benefit from increased access. Listen to the entrepreneur, the farmer, the botanist, and the medical supplier. You may be surprised to discover who would benefit from a medical marijuana business in your community.

3. **Be patient.** I know many of the remaining concerns about this new law come from lingering questions about how the program will work. These details will be addressed. The new law directs state agencies to create regulations that ensure the safety of all Ohioans and the administration of a well-regulated program. We did our best to ensure through the law that the cannabis will be secure, the patients will have access to needed medicine, and that the sick and the young—and everyone in between—will be safe. Medical marijuana businesses cannot legally exist in Ohio until they are licensed by the appropriate agency, and they cannot be licensed until the rules are created. Local governments will have plenty of time to act once the rules have been written.

Medical marijuana businesses will not materialize on September 8th. Instead the regulatory process will formally begin, some medical marijuana users will gain an affirmative defense, and doctors will be permitted to speak frankly with their patients about options. I encourage you to reach out to the agencies in charge of writing medical marijuana rules if there is a specific concern you would like to see addressed. Listen to the agencies when they introduce rules, and your worries may well be eased.

Some local governments have already passed or started hearing resolutions and ordinances banning licensed medical marijuana businesses from their communities. I understand the urge to act, but keep an open mind. Please consider all the good that this medicine can do for the citizens of your communities.

Sincerely,



Kenny Yuka
State Senator
25th District