

## **Emerging Issue: Medical Marijuana**

### **Summary of Public Comment**

Prepared for the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee  
August 2010

#### Background

The Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee anticipated that its discussions about the Medical Marijuana Act may generate significant public interest. Before the Committee's April 2010 meeting, a special e-mail address was created for people who wanted to submit comment electronically. The Committee's Web site also contained information on how to submit comments via regular mail.

The Committee received 142 written comments via regular or electronic mail between April 9 and August 22, with some people sending more than one comment. The Committee also received 102 form letters from "patients, families of patients, and concerned citizens" acknowledging the need to regulate the industry. The letters asked that the Committee consider adopting the recommendations of the Medical Marijuana Work Group that it established to provide suggestions on how to change the law.

This briefing paper provides an overview of the comments submitted to the committee. It does not include the comments provided by dozens of people at meetings of the full Committee in April and June or at meetings of the subcommittee on June 29, July 12, and August 12.

#### Comment Received in Advance of the April 2010 Meeting

The committee received 44 written comments from April 9 until the April 26-27 meeting at which it examined numerous issues related to medical marijuana. Comment in advance of the meeting broke down as shown below.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>#</b>
For additional restrictions	29	For repealing the law	3
For expanding the law	5	Generally in favor of medical marijuana	2
For both restrictions and expansions	3	Suggestions for improvement	2

#### Comment Received in Advance of the June Meeting

At the April meeting, the Committee asked its staff to create a work group to recommend changes to the law. The committee asked that recommendations be presented at its June 28 meeting. During this time, the committee received 14 written comments. In general, the comments broke down as follows.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>#</b>
For additional restrictions	4	Generally in favor of medical marijuana	6
For expanding the law	2	Against medical marijuana	1
For both restrictions and expansions	1		

### Comment Received Through Subcommittee Meetings

At its June 28 meeting, the Committee formed a subcommittee of four members to work on draft legislation. The subcommittee met three times. During this time, the Committee received 67 e-mails from 63 people and also received the 102 form letters.

Most of the comment was submitted before the subcommittee's final meeting on August 12, while it was still considering various options. From June 28 through August 11, the Committee received 42 e-mails. Categorizing the content of the e-mails is more difficult because many ideas were in flux at this time. However, the comment generally broke down as shown below.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>#</b>
For one or more specific change	3	For legalizing marijuana	2
For unspecified or other restrictions	3	Generally in favor of medical marijuana	9
Against one or more specific change	10	General information on medical marijuana	10
For expanding the law	5		

The subcommittee decided on its final proposals on August 12, including the decision to create a regulatory structure similar to one adopted in Colorado earlier this year. From August 12 through August 22, the Committee received 42 written comments. Most comments were specific to the changes, and the authors of these comments most often supported some changes and opposed others. Comment received during this time may best be characterized as shown below.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>#</b>
Specific to changes	22	Against restrictions	3
For other or unspecified changes	7	Generally in favor of medical marijuana	2
For expanding the law	1	General information on medical marijuana	6
For legalizing marijuana	1		

### Summary

Overall, comments — other than the 102 form letters — received on this topic over the past five months may be characterized as indicated below.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>#</b>
For additional restrictions	36	For one or more specific changes	5
General comment in favor/information	35	For both restrictions and expansions	3
Specific to proposed changes	22	For repealing the law	3
For expanding the law	13	For legalizing marijuana	3
Against one or more specific change	10	Against restrictions	3
For unspecified restrictions	8	Against medical marijuana	1