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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MARSHALL).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 9, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ROGER W. MARSHALL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION DECLARES WAR ON STATE LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, Friday, the Trump administration declared war on State legalization of marijuana as they come out on the wrong side of history and the American public.

The Obama administration recognized that the vast voter-driven move-

ment to legalize marijuana at the State level was something that couldn't be stopped and, in fact, that the Federal Government shouldn't interfere. Their Justice Department issued guidance, known as the Cole amendment, that, as long as these voter-approved State legalization efforts were enforced rigorously and thoughtfully, the Federal Government wouldn't interfere with what the voters wanted.

Friday, Sessions and the Trump administration overruled that guidance and declared open war on the part of 93 U.S. attorneys to feel free to interfere with what local voters have decided.

This is strongly opposed by the American public. Over 60 percent in poll after poll show that Americans favor legalization of marijuana. When it deals with medical marijuana, that percentage is over 90 percent. We have seen State after State, approve medical marijuana including Florida, with a 71 percent "yes" vote in November of 2016.

If the question is, regardless of how you feel about marijuana, should the Federal Government interfere with what the voters have decided, three out of four voters say the Federal Government should keep their hands off it.

Luckily, at least as far as medical marijuana is concerned, they are protected from interference by the Justice Department because of the amendment that I have authored with my friend DANA ROHRBACHER. It is in the continuing resolution. It needs to be in any long-term funding bill. In fact, we should embrace an amendment by our colleague TOM MCCLINTOCK from California, that would expand those protections to any State legal marijuana activity.

The Justice Department is not just on the wrong side of history and the American public, they are missing a chance to cure the damage caused by selective and cruel enforcement of

marijuana laws. We are still arresting tens of thousands—mostly young men of color, especially African-American men—for something the majority of Americans now think should be legal.

We miss a chance to win the war against opioid death and addiction. In States that have medical marijuana—surprise—there are fewer pills prescribed. The longer the States have had medical marijuana, the lower the overdose deaths. In California, which has had medical marijuana the longest, there are a third fewer opioid deaths. We are missing an opportunity to build on that.

We are missing the opportunity to increase the hundreds of millions of dollars that are now going to the State tax coffers to deal with education and addiction and law enforcement through State legal efforts and away from the drug cartels and the black market. Indeed, if we clean up this mess, we will have billions of dollars to devote to public purposes and further undermine the strength of drug cartels that use the black market to fund their efforts.

It is past time that Congress steps up and fixes this mess.

The good news is this reckless action by the Trump administration and Jeff Sessions will accelerate the time that we support what State and local governments should do: rationalize our cannabis policy and stop this ineffective, failed prohibition.

LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, on National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, we salute and thank the brave men and women who make up our law enforcement community.

Officers on the local, State, and Federal level dedicate their efforts to keep

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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