NORML Monthly Update

Legislation in May

Ashley’s Law passes

- The House Bill 4870, also known as Ashley's law, passed both houses on May 17th. Ashley’s law is named for an 11 year old student in Schaumburg whose family successfully sued the school district in order to allow her to take cannabis oil to prevent seizures a school. After a judge ordered the school district to allow the administration of necessary medication, Skokie State Rep. Lou Lang introduced the bill which allows parents, guardians or caregivers designated by DPH to administer cannabis medication to students in schools. The bill now awaits Governor Rauner’s signature.

Hemp Production in IL passes

- Senate Bill 2298 passed both houses on May 30th, and is now awaiting Governor Rauner’s signature to be signed into law. The law would allow for commercial growth, production, processing and sale industrial hemp products by licensed businesses in Illinois. It would also exclude hemp plants and products of the Noxious Weed Act and Cannabis Control Act. Industrial hemp can be used to make and sell products from textiles to cosmetics and health foods. The bill passed the Senate with near unanimous support.

Cannabis Alternative to Opioids Bill passes

- Senate Bill 0336, which would make any patients who would be prescribed opioids eligible for medical cannabis under the Illinois Compassionate Use program, passed both houses on May 31st. It now awaits Governor Rauner’s signature. Medical cannabis has been proven to be effective for treating chronic pain, and areas with legalized cannabis have seen decreased numbers of opioid overdoses, while opioid addiction and overdose have grown across the country in recent years. The bill also removes the fingerprint and background check requirements for patients to be eligible for medical cannabis, removing all felony exemptions for applicants.

You can show your support for all of these bills and further the cause of cannabis access and justice by contacting Governor Rauner and urging him to sign these bills into law. You can reach his office in Springfield by calling 312-814-2121

Chicago NORML Events

Expungement Summit
This month Chicago NORML went a long way to educate about and advocate for the process of expungement. At the end of April we led a class at Soul and Wellness to educate potential patients on what expungement is, what drug convictions can be expunged from a criminal record in Illinois, and how to go about that process on state and federal records. This past weekend Chicago NORML brought out several volunteers to the Cook County Criminal Records Expungement Summit at Kennedy College. There members and volunteers helped direct and inform people to get their records expunged on the spot. Chicago NORML contributed a total of 52 volunteer hours to the event, and helped so many people apply for expungement and get a more equal opportunity for aid, employment, education and medication. Expungement of drug-related charges has been a major cause of Chicago NORML since day one. It was great to connect with volunteers and help out people good people in our own communities.

IL Lobby Day

On May 23rd our sister organization IL NORML went to Springfield to lobby for legalization and expanded access for medical cannabis. Some Chicago NORML members attended and met with their senators and representatives to ask where they stand on issues of legalization. From the the overwhelmingly supportive votes on cannabis access bills this month, we can tell their presence and pressure on political leaders makes a big difference. Be sure to reach out to us if you want to join Chicago NORML on our Federal Lobby Day trip to DC on July 22nd-24th.

Coming up!
Keep an eye out for Chicago NORML’s report of the Cannabis Cup this month. On June 24th Chicago NORML will be holding a training session for our House Calls program. If you’re interested in educating individuals and businesses on the benefits, laws, and justice issues around cannabis, be sure to sign up!

Chicago NORML has been keeping up the fight for just drug policies, equity in cannabis industry and supporting medical research, all with the help of our wonderful, active community. As we get closer to elections this November, we will need more of your help. So become a member of Chicago NORML and stay tuned to see our upcoming events and how you can help!