January 4, 2010

Assembly Committee on Health
Dave Jones, Chair
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0009

Re.: Marijuana Control, Regulation and Education Act (A.B. 390, Ammiano)

Dear Sir:

I am an academically active Emeritus Professor of Medicine in the Pulmonary and Critical Care Division of the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and have spent nearly 30 years of my professional career studying the health effects of marijuana and Δ⁹-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) with continuous funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)/National Institutes of Health (NIH) over this extended period of time. Of the 399 peer-reviewed articles (published or in press) that I have authored, 66 relate to the health effects of marijuana or THC, specifically to their effects on the lung and host defense (immunity). On the basis of my extensive experience in federally funded marijuana-related research, I believe that I am well qualified to render an informed opinion in testifying on the health effects of marijuana at the January 12, 2010, hearing in Sacramento on A.B. 390 (Marijuana Control, Regulation and Education Act).

I am appending two of my recent publications pertaining to the question whether habitual smoking of marijuana leads to pulmonary disease, specifically chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and lung cancer, the two major pulmonary consequences of regular tobacco smoking. On the basis of my own work and a systematic and thorough review of the relevant literature on this subject, I have come to the conclusion that regular marijuana smoking does not lead to COPD and is not a significant risk factor for the development of lung or aerodigestive tract (head and neck) cancer, in contrast to the wealth of evidence implicating tobacco smoking as the major risk factor for both COPD and respiratory cancer.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

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