



**Working to Reform Marijuana Laws**

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## Louisiana (2022): HB 137, Testimony in support of patient protections

My name is Jax James and I serve as the State Policy Manager for the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML). I would like to thank the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice for considering House Bill 137. NORML is supportive of legislative efforts to provide protections for medical cannabis patients.

House Bill 137 seeks to grant immunity to medical cannabis patients in the state of Louisiana so that they cannot be unfairly prosecuted for lawful behavior. If passed, the bill would make it so that registered qualifying patients, their caregivers, and out-of-state registered patients are exempt from prosecution for the possession and consumption of cannabis, with certain limitations.

This legislation is a common-sense response to the development of a state-sanctioned medical cannabis access program. Law enforcement should not target patients or their caregivers for abiding by the law regarding their possession and consumption of medical marijuana. This bill will ensure that those individuals do not live in fear that they may be wrongly arrested or prosecuted for behavior that is not a crime. Patients should never be punished, or threatened with punishment, for obtaining and consuming their medicine.

For these reasons, NORML urges Louisiana lawmakers to thoughtfully consider and pass HB 137 to protect medical cannabis patients who legally consume their medicine from being wrongfully prosecuted.

