



Law Enforcement Before-and-After Quotes: Well-Regulated Medical Cannabis Laws Aren't Causing Problems

In states with medical marijuana laws, it is not uncommon for law enforcement to initially be wary or opposed to the proposal. However, once those laws are implemented, even previously opposed law enforcement officials tend to recognize the laws do not cause problems. Law enforcement organizations that had opposed medical marijuana bills in several states — including Illinois and Minnesota — also came to see the laws did not cause problems once they were implemented.

Dennis Flaherty, Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association executive director, before passage:

“We do not support the legalization of marijuana for any purpose. It’s illegal on the federal level and we’re not going to support any legislation that would put us in conflict with ... federal law.” (“Medical marijuana faces tough road in Minnesota,” *Associated Press*, December 12, 2012)

The *Associated Press* noted, “Law enforcement leaders say marijuana is an addictive gateway drug that is associated with violent crime and can lead to use of other illicit drugs. They also say states that have legalized marijuana have enforcement problems. They point to California, where federal authorities are cracking down on dispensaries. Flaherty says anyone there can get a buyer's card for just about any reason.”

Dennis Flaherty after passage:

The *Twin Cities Pioneer Press* reported that Mr. Flaherty did not oppose adding intractable pain to the program. Flaherty “said police are unaware of any problems with the current cannabis program and do not expect any now that pain will be included.” (“Minnesota OKs medical marijuana use for pain,” *Pioneer Press*, December 1, 2015)

Illinois Chiefs of Police Association before passage:

“There's a lot of stuff in marijuana that's not good for you ... It's like people taking meth. People feel a lot better after ingesting methamphetamine.” (Keegan Hamilton, “Lobbyist For Illinois Police Chiefs: Medical Marijuana = Meth,” *Riverfront Times*, May 12, 2010)

Illinois Chiefs of Police Association after passage:

“Police have not noticed any significant problems with either law [medical marijuana or a civil fine law], according to Oak Brook Police Chief James Kruger Jr., who is first vice president of the Illinois Chiefs of Police Association. ...” (“Illinois lawmakers propose legalizing recreational marijuana,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 23, 2017)

Mike Schirling, Burlington, Vermont Police Chief, before passage:

Schirling had initially been concerned about having a dispensary in Burlington. (“With few complaints,

state seeks fourth marijuana dispensary," *Burlington Free Press*, August 26, 2013)

Mike Schirling after passage:

Burlington Police Chief Mike Schirling told a reporter, "I'm not aware of any issues," after it opened. ("With few complaints, state seeks fourth marijuana dispensary," *Burlington Free Press*, August 26, 2013)