

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 7, 2019

The Honorable William Barr
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Uttam Dhillon
Acting Administrator
Drug Enforcement Administration
8701 Morrissette Drive
Springfield, VA 22152

Dear Attorney General Barr and Acting Administrator Dhillon:

We write to urge you to do more to speed research on the medicinal benefits of cannabis.

Some of us have written to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) before on the topic of cannabis, and we write again because the matter is of such importance. There is tremendous evidence that cannabis has the power to treat a variety of medical ailments; that is why 33 states and the District of Columbia have made it legal for that purpose.

In fact, the federal government recognizes the healing properties of cannabis as well. So far the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved one compound produced by the plant and two compounds which are synthetic substances mimicking ones produced by the plant, all known as cannabinoids, for medical use. More research is needed, however, to make additional products available.

Unfortunately, the federal government stands in the way. The application process to research cannabis is one that is arduous and long. First, one who wishes to engage in this research must at the very least work with three separate federal entities – the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), DEA, and FDA. Approval is required by DEA, which involves a site inspection, and FDA. This is not including any involvement by governments at the state or local level.

Second, there is only one federally-approved grower of cannabis for research in the United States – the University of Mississippi. Researchers must wait to be provided the cannabis to begin their work. Beyond any delays in time this adds, the cannabis itself is generally regarded as having poor quality. The University of Mississippi also does not offer cannabinoids.

It is thus not surprising that those who want to research cannabis are frustrated. Some wait months or even years to have their applications approved. And then they have to deal with raw materials that do not always lend themselves to proper research.

We recognize DEA has taken concrete steps to improve research prospects, but they do not go far enough. Specifically, we applaud DEA for improving its application process for research by putting it entirely online in early 2018. But, as John Hudak, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, told *Rolling Stone* in February 2018, that is just a “very small drop in the bucket” in terms of speeding up the process. And, we appreciate that DEA has increased its quota in 2019 for growing

cannabis for research purposes by more than five times, writing in the December 28, 2018 *Federal Register* notice approving the quota that it was due to “increased usage projections for federally approved research projects.” But, that does not address any delays in receiving cannabis, its quality, or what is presented as materials for research options.

We urge you then to go beyond these steps and do whatever you can to speed up and improve the research application process. Please let us know what you are considering to change the application process so it moves more quickly and what additional resources from Congress would help in that regard.

One action which would be beneficial is to act on one of the 26 pending applications to grow cannabis for research purposes; these applicants could provide better raw materials for research. Some of us have written with questions about these applications previously; we never received a response. So, we would like to re-ask those questions here:

1. What is the current status of the 26 cannabis manufacturer applications? How long has each been pending before DOJ and DEA?
2. What steps have the DEA and DOJ taken to review the cannabis manufacturer applications currently pending? What are the reasons these applications have not been approved?
3. When do you estimate the DEA and DOJ will complete their review of all of the cannabis manufacturing applications and begin approving some as new manufacturers?
4. In the past 12 months, excluding Schedule I Bulk Manufacturer registrations for cannabis, how many other DEA registrations has DOJ reviewed?

We hope DOJ and DEA share our goal of bringing safe and effective medical treatments to those who are suffering as quickly as possible; we believe cannabis can be part of the solution, but we need more research to make that happen.

Thank you for reviewing our request, and we look forward to a prompt response.

Sincerely,



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress M.C.



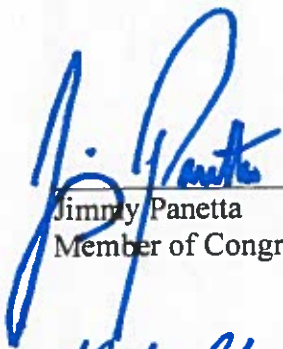
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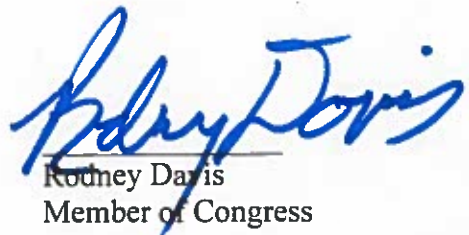
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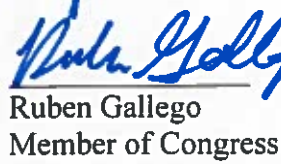


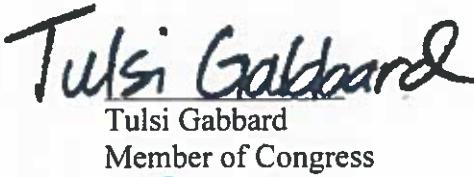
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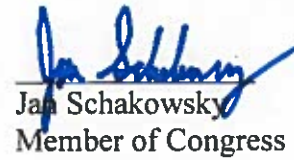

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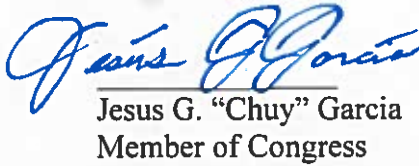

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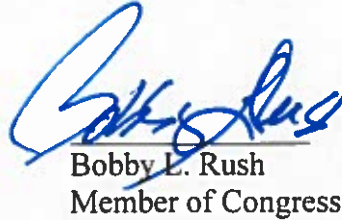

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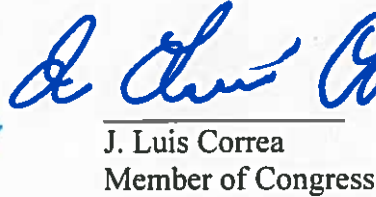

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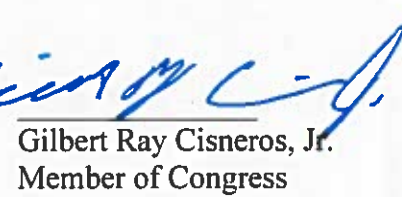

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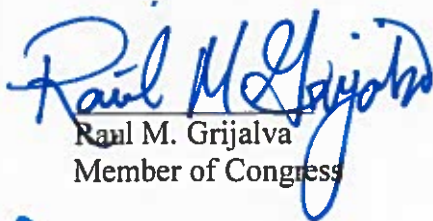

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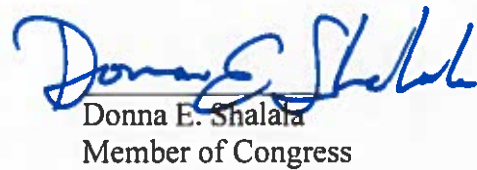

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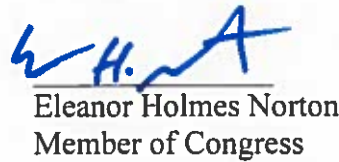

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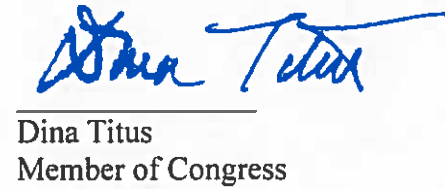

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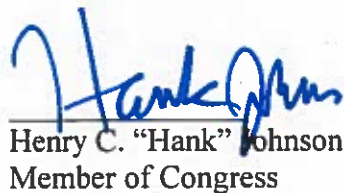

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