

# AG Nominee Lynch Opposes Marijuana Legalization

*Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) encouraged by comments from Atty. Gen. nominee*

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WASHINGTON, DC - Today, Loretta Lynch, Pres. Obama's nominee for Attorney General of United States, told the Senate Judiciary committee that she specifically does not approve of the legalization of marijuana. When asked about the issue from Sen. Jeff Sessions, Lynch distanced herself from President Obama's recent comments about marijuana comparing it to alcohol.

As reported by The Hill, "Well, senator I certainly don't hold that view and don't agree with that view of marijuana," she said. "I certainly think that the president was speaking from his personal experience and personal opinion, neither of which I'm able to share. But I can tell you that not only do I not support legalization of marijuana, it's not the position of the Department of Justice currently to support the legalization, nor would it be the position should I be confirmed as attorney general."

Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) was greatly encouraged by these comments. Kevin Sabet, SAM's President and a former advisor on drug policy in President Obama's first term commented, "Loretta Lynch could have skirted the issue of legalization by simply repeating DOJ's policy of select intervention, but she tackled it head on. We are breathing a sigh of relief. Ms. Lynch is a knowledgeable, experienced, justice-minded individual, and for her to come out so adamantly against legalization is extremely encouraging. It will give our efforts a shot in the arm. We look forward to working with her on these important matters if she is confirmed by the Senate."

Additionally, Lynch discussed many things consistent with SAM's position on drug policy. Besides recognizing the threat of prescription drug abuse, Lynch discussed fairness in the criminal justice system and the importance of alternatives for nonviolent offenders.

Lynch's comments are consistent with numerous statements from the Office of National Drug Control Policy, along with a recent statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Medical Association, American Society of Addiction Medicine, and American Psychiatric Association.