



# Voters Approve Nation's First Marijuana Business Tax

**Oakland, CA, USA:** Municipal voters on Tuesday (July 21, 2009) overwhelmingly approved the nation's first ever business tax on retail marijuana sales.

Approximately 80 percent of Oakland voters approved the new tax (which appeared on the ballot as Measure F), which imposes an additional tax for "cannabis businesses" of \$18 for every \$1,000 of gross receipts beginning January 1, 2010.

Presently, Oakland's medicinal cannabis dispensaries are taxed at the same rate as other retail sales businesses (\$60 per year for the \$50,000 of gross receipts, plus \$1.20 for each additional \$100,000).

Four dispensaries are licensed by the Oakland City Council to sell and dispense medical marijuana.

According to a financial analysis by the Oakland City Auditor, Oakland's new cannabis business tax will generate an estimated \$300,000 in additional annual tax revenue. Other proponents have estimated that the new tax could yield up to a million dollars yearly.

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## Oregon: Lawmakers Pass Regulations To License Commercial Hemp Production

**Salem, OR, USA:** State lawmakers approved legislation this week that seeks to license farmers to cultivate hemp as an agricultural commodity. Hemp is a distinct variety of the plant species cannabis sativa that contains only trace (less than one percent) amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the primary psychoactive compound in marijuana.

On Tuesday, House Representatives approved Senate Bill 676 by a vote of 46 to 11. Senators had previously endorsed the measure by a vote of 27 to 2.

The bill now awaits action by Democrat Gov. Ted Kulongoski.

As approved by the legislature, SB 676 authorizes the state Department of Agriculture to regulate the commercial production of cannabis containing levels of THC under 0.3 percent THC.

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## Increased Marijuana Use Not Associated With Rise In Incidences Of Schizophrenia, Study Says

**Staffordshire, United Kingdom:** Increased cannabis use by the public has not been followed by a proportional rise in diagnoses of schizophrenia or psychosis, according to the findings of a forthcoming study to be published in the journal *Schizophrenia Research*.

Investigators at the Keele University Medical School in Britain compared trends in marijuana use and incidences of schizophrenia in the United Kingdom from 1996 to 2005. Researchers reported that the "incidence and prevalence of schizophrenia and psychoses were either stable or declining" during this period, even the use of cannabis among the general population was rising.

"[T]he expected rise in diagnoses of schizophrenia and psychoses did not occur over a 10 year period," authors concluded. "This study

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## The Willamette Valley NORML News Report

is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit project to record and broadcast news, announcements and information about cannabis law reform.

The W-V-NORML News Report is produced by the Eugene, OREGON chapter of NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

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Check 'em out on-line! *visit:*

**WillametteValleyNORML.org**

## A Voice for Responsible Marijuana Smokers

Since its founding in 1970, NORML has provided a voice in the public policy debate for those Americans who oppose marijuana prohibition and favor an end to the practice of arresting marijuana smokers. A nonprofit public-interest advocacy group, NORML represents the interests of the tens of millions of Americans who smoke marijuana responsibly. During the 1970s, NORML led the successful efforts to decriminalize minor marijuana offenses in 11 states and significantly lower marijuana penalties in all others.

The oldest and largest marijuana legalization organization in the country, NORML maintains a professional staff in Washington, DC, and a network of volunteer state and local [NORML Chapters](#) across the country. Check 'em out, and find the one nearest you!

**The NORML mission is to move public opinion sufficiently to achieve the repeal of marijuana prohibition so that the responsible use of cannabis by adults is no longer subject to penalty.**

When marijuana is enjoyed responsibly, subjecting users to harsh criminal and civil penalties provides no public benefit and causes terrible injustices. For reasons of public safety, public health, economics and justice, the prohibition laws should be repealed to the extent that they criminalize responsible marijuana use. **NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws – is located at 1600 K Street, NW, Suite 501, Washington, DC 20006-2832. Phone (202) 483-5500, Fax: (202) 483-0057 or visit: [www.norml.org](http://www.norml.org)**

Today Willamette Valley NORML joins the fight to reform state and federal marijuana laws, whether by voter initiative or through the elected legislatures. W-V-NORML will serve as an informational resource to media on marijuana-related stories, providing a perspective to offset the [anti-marijuana propaganda](#) from the government; lobby state and federal legislators in support of reform legislation; publish a regular [newsletter](#); host an informative web site; and serve as the umbrella group for a regional network of citizen-activists committed to ending marijuana prohibition and legalizing marijuana.

Along with their parent organization, W-V-NORML will sponsor public advertising campaigns to better educate the public about marijuana and alternatives to current marijuana policy; provide legal assistance and support to victims of the current laws; and promote relevant research.

W-V-NORML supports the right of adults to use marijuana responsibly, whether for [medical](#) or [personal](#) purposes. All penalties, both civil and criminal, should be eliminated for responsible use. W-V-NORML also advocates the legalization of [hemp](#) (non-psychoactive marijuana) for industrial use. **To find out more, like how you can help, call, write or visit our website. You'll be glad you did!**

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Representatives from the Oakland City Council, the California Nurses Association, and the dispensary community publicly advocated for the new tax, which had no formal opposition.

"The passage of this first-in-the-nation tax further legitimizes cannabis-based enterprises in Oakland and elsewhere," NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre said. These outlets are contributing to the health and welfare of their local communities, both socially and now economically. At a time when many municipalities are strapped for tax revenues and cutting public services it is likely that public officials in other cities will begin considering similar proposals."

City officials in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Berkeley, and Sacramento may also impose a cannabis-business tax on certain retail dispensaries.

*For more information, please contact either Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500, or Dale Gieringer, California NORML Coordinator at: (415) 563-5858.*

## **Oakland: Voters To Decide Medical Marijuana Tax Measure**

**Oakland, CA, USA:** Municipal voters will decide next week on whether to approve a first-in-the-nation business tax on local medical marijuana providers.

If approved by voters on July 21, Measure F would impose a new business tax for "cannabis businesses" of \$18 for every \$1,000 of gross receipts.

Presently, Oakland's medical cannabis dispensaries are taxed at the same rate as other retail sales businesses (\$60 per year for the \$50,000 of gross receipts, plus \$1.20 for each additional \$100,000).

Four dispensaries are licensed by the Oakland City Council to sell and dispense medical marijuana.

According to a financial analysis by the Oakland City Auditor, passage of the new tax would generate an estimated \$300,000 in additional annual tax revenue.

Representatives from the Oakland City Council, the California Nurses Association, and the dispensary community are publicly backing the modified tax proposal, which they say will help the city avoid cutting public services.

*For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500, or visit: <http://www.smartvoter.org/2009/07/21/ca/alm/meas/F/>. A similar medicinal marijuana tax proposal is being considered in Los Angeles.*

## **California: Tax Board Says Regulating Commercial Pot Sales Would Yield \$1.4 Billion Annually Also Predicts Decline In Use Of Booze And Tobacco**

**Sacramento, CA, USA:** A revised budgetary analysis by the California State Board of Equalization (BOE) estimates that taxing and regulating the retail sale of cannabis by adults would raise approximately \$1.4 billion in annual new state revenue.

The BOE's estimate, released today, assesses a \$50 per ounce tax on the retail sale of cannabis (among other state-imposed costs), as recommended under Assembly Bill 390: The Marijuana Control, Regulation and Education Act. This act seeks to license and tax the commercial production, packaging, and retail sale of marijuana to those 21 years of age or older.

As introduced, AB 390 would *not* impose taxation or licensing requirements on the non-commercial production of cannabis (up to ten mature plants), or on the not-for-profit distribution of pot. Further, the bill would not alter existing legislation on the use of medicinal cannabis, nor would it impose new taxes or sanctions on the medical cultivation of cannabis.

According to the BOE's revised calculations, enactment of AB 390 would raise an estimate \$990 million annually from the proposed \$50 per ounce levy on retail sales of marijuana in addition to another \$392 million in yearly sales tax revenues.

The BOE assessment did not assess whether the enactment of AB 390 would reduce existing law enforcement and prosecutorial costs, which have been estimated by California NORML to average some \$200 million per year. In 2007, a record 74,000 Californians were charged with marijuana offenses - the largest total since the state 'decriminalized' the personal possession of small amounts of marijuana in 1976.

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<continued from previous page> The BOE report acknowledged that legalizing pot for adults would likely result in a "substitution effect" where consumers gravitate toward the use of marijuana "and away from cigarettes and alcohol."

According to a May 2009 California Field poll of 901 registered voters, 56 percent of Californians say that lawmakers should "legalize marijuana for recreational use and tax its proceeds." Presently, the state is facing a \$26 billion budget deficit.

"With the state in the midst of an historic economic crisis, the move toward regulating and taxing marijuana is simply common sense," AB 390 sponsor Tom Ammiano (D-San Francisco) said upon the bill's introduction in February. "This legislation would generate much needed revenue for the state, restrict access to only those over 21, end the environmental damage to our public lands from illicit crops, and improve public safety by redirecting law enforcement efforts to more serious crimes. California has the opportunity to be the first state in the nation to enact a smart, responsible public policy for the control and regulation of marijuana."

Assembly Bill 390 is presently before the Assembly Committees on Public Safety and Health, which are expected to take up the issue early next year.

In May, Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger acknowledged that "it's time for a debate" regarding the legalization of marijuana for adults.

Commenting on the BOE's latest analysis, California NORML Coordinator Dale Gieringer said, "It makes no sense for taxpayers to be paying to arrest, prosecute and imprison marijuana offenders, when they could be reaping revenues from a legally regulated market."

A 2009 economic review by California NORML estimates that the eventual establishment of commercial cannabis-based businesses and related industries in California could ultimately raise some \$12 to \$18 billion in annual new tax revenue.

*For more information, please contact Dale Gieringer, California NORML Coordinator, at: (415) 563-5858 or Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at: (202) 483-5500. Additional information regarding AB 390 is available from NORML's Take Action Center at: <http://capwiz.com/norml2/issues/alert/?alertid=12758896>.*

<continued from OREGON HEMP, page 1 > Democrat senator Floyd Prozansky, who sponsored the measure, said, "By passing SB 676 with strong bipartisan support, the Oregon Legislature has taken a proactive position to allow its farmers the right to grow industrial hemp, to provide American manufacturers with domestically-grown hemp, and to profit from that effort."

A handful of states – including North Dakota, Montana, and Vermont – have enacted similar regulations to allow for the licensing of industrial hemp production under state law. However, such production remains criminally prohibited under federal law, which defines all varieties of cannabis as illegal under the Controlled Substances Act.

In June, Maine lawmakers approved similar legislation, LD 1159, calling on the state to license farmers to grow hemp "contingent upon action by the federal government."

Legislation pending in Congress, HR 1866, the Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2009, seeks to amend federal law to allow for the state-licensed production of hemp, free from federal interference.

According to a 2005 Congressional Research Service report, "The United States is the only developed nation in which industrial hemp is not an established crop."

*For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500, or visit: <http://www.votehemp.com>.*

## **Colorado: Board Of Health Rejects Proposed Changes To State's Medical Marijuana Law**

**Denver, CO, USA:** Members of the state Board of Health voted 9-3 this week to reject proposed restrictions to the state's nearly ten-year-old medical marijuana law.

If approved, the measures would have limited state-licensed caregivers or dispensaries to providing medicinal cannabis to no more than five patients at one time.

An estimated 350 Coloradoans testified against the proposed changes during the 12-hour meeting. Only eleven people were signed up to speak in favor of the changes.

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<continued from previous page> Over 7,600 patients are registered with the Department of Health to use marijuana legally under state law.

"The outpouring of grassroots support trumped the cynicism of law enforcement and others who sought to limit patients' ability to legally and safely acquire their medicine," NORML Executive Director Allen St. Pierre. "Let this be an example to those around the nation who wish to bring about common-sense marijuana law reforms in their communities, and a lesson to those politicians who oppose such changes."

*For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500, or visit: <http://www.sensiblecolorado.org/>.*

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## **Colorado: Breckenridge Voters Likely To Decide Whether To Eliminate Pot Possession Penalties**

**Breckenridge, CO , USA:** City voters will likely decide this November whether to eliminate all criminal and civil penalties that prohibit the adult possession of marijuana.

Proponents of the measure, Sensible Breckenridge, gathered 1,400 signatures from registered voters to place the measure on the municipal ballot. The total was nearly three times the number of signatures needed to bring the issue before a public vote.

If enacted, the measure would remove all citywide penalties – including fines – for the adult possession of up to one ounce of marijuana. The initiative would also eliminate local penalties prohibiting the possession of cannabis paraphernalia by those age 21 or older.

The Breckenridge Town Council has the opportunity to enact the proposed ordinance at its next meeting on August 11. If council members fail to act on the measure then it will go before local voters on November 3.

Denver voters supported a similar measure in 2005.

In 2006, over 70 percent of Breckenridge voters endorsed Amendment 44, an unsuccessful statewide ballot initiative that sought to eliminate certain marijuana.

*For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500 or visit: <http://www.sensiblecolorado.org/>.*

## **Hawaii: Lawmakers Override Governor's Veto Of Marijuana Task Force Bill**

**Honolulu, HI, USA:** Lawmakers voted 38 to 9 on Wednesday to override Republican Gov. Linda Lingle's veto of Senate Bill 1058, which establishes a study committee to examine options for providing state-authorized patients with access to medical cannabis.

Over 3,000 Hawaiians legally possess and cultivate cannabis under the authority of the state's nearly ten-year-old medical marijuana law.

*Full text of SB 1058 is available at: [http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2009/bills/SB\\_1058\\_CD1\\_.htm](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2009/bills/SB_1058_CD1_.htm).*

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## **Hawaii: Governor Vetoes Medicinal Marijuana Task Force Measure, Again**

**Honolulu, HI, USA:** For the second year in a row, Republican Gov. Linda Lingle has vetoed legislation that sought to establish a study committee to examine options for providing patients with access to medical cannabis.

As approved by the legislature, Senate Bill 1058 called on a special legislative task force to "report on the policies and procedures for access, distribution, security, and other relevant issues related to the medical use of cannabis for all the states that currently have a medical cannabis program."

In her veto message, the Governor alleged, "The medical task force is unnecessary because it would attempt to deal with issues ... that can only be addressed by circumventing federal law."

Under the state's medical marijuana law, which was enacted by the legislature in 2000, over 3,000 Hawaiians are registered with the state to possess and or cultivate cannabis.

*For more information, please see NORML's blog at: <http://blog.norml.org/2009/07/08/see-no-evil-hear-no-evil-speak-no-evil/>. Additional information on pending state legislation is available from NORML's Take Action Center at: <http://capwiz.com/norml2/issues/>.*

## Congressional House Committee Votes To Lift District's Ban On Medical Marijuana

**Washington, DC, USA:** Members of the US House Appropriations Committee voted last night to remove a decade-long federal ban forbidding the District of Columbia from legalizing the physician-supervised use of cannabis.

The Committee voted to remove the language from the House version of the District's 2010 budget bill. Since 1998, Congress has annually included a provision in the District's annual appropriation bill forbidding Washington, DC from reducing any penalties pertaining to the city's marijuana laws. Congress initially enacted the provision – known as the 'Barr amendment' – in response to a pending citywide ballot initiative that sought to legalize the medicinal possession and use of cannabis.

Nearly 70 percent of District voters ultimately approved the medical marijuana initiative, which has never been implemented.

Both the House of Representatives and the Senate must still vote on the District's appropriations bill.

If Congress approves D.C.'s budget bill without the amendment it remains unclear whether District officials will be able to legally implement the 1998 ballot measure or whether D.C. voters would need to vote again on a similar measure before the proposal could become law.

*For more information, please contact Allen St. Pierre, NORML Executive Director, at (202) 483-5500.*

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<continued from SCHIZOPHRENIA, page 1 > does not therefore support the specific causal link between cannabis use and incidence of psychotic disorders. ... This concurs with other reports indicating that increases in population cannabis use have not been followed by increases in psychotic incidence."

The results of a separate clinical trial published earlier this month reported that the recreational use of cannabis does not stimulate the production of dopamine in a manner that is consistent with the development of schizophrenia.

Last year, British lawmakers reclassified cannabis possession from a verbal warning to a criminal offense punishable by up to five years in jail. Lawmakers called for the increased penalties in

large part as a response to allegations that marijuana use was linked to rising incidences of mental illness.

*For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. For additional information on cannabis use and mental illness, please see the NORML white paper, "Cannabis, Mental Health, and Context," available online at: [http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group\\_ID=6798](http://norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=6798). Full text of the study, "Assessing the impact of cannabis use trends in diagnosed schizophrenia in the United Kingdom from 1996 to 2005," will appear in Schizophrenia Research.*

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## Marijuana's Impact On Brain Function "Minimal," Study Says

**London, United Kingdom:** The consumption of cannabis, even long-term, has a "minimal" impact on brain function, according to a systematic literature review published online this week by the journal *Psychological Medicine*.

An international team of investigators from the United Kingdom, Spain, Brazil, Australia, and Switzerland conducted a systematic review of the effects of cannabis on brain structure and function.

Authors wrote, "We reviewed literature reporting neuroimaging studies of chronic or acute cannabis use published up until January 2009. ... Sixty-six studies were identified, of which 41 met the inclusion criteria. Thirty-three were functional (SPECT/PET/fMRI) and eight structural (volumetric/DTI) imaging studies. ... Only three of the structural imaging studies found differences between users and controls."

Investigators concluded, "Minimal evidence of major effects of cannabis on brain structure has been reported," noting that cannabis users and controls perform similarly on cognitive tasks.

According to a 2001 study published in the journal *Archives of General Psychiatry*, long-term cannabis smokers who abstained from pot for one week "showed virtually no significant differences from control subjects (those who had smoked marijuana less than 50 times in their lives) on a battery of 10 neuropsychological tests." Investigators added, "Former heavy users, who had consumed little or no cannabis in the three months before testing, [also] showed no significant differences from control subjects on any of these tests on any of the

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## **NORML Deputy Director Declares Marijuana Is Safer Than Booze In New Book**

**Washington, DC, USA:** The consumption of cannabis by adults is safer to the user and to society than is the consumption of alcohol says NORML Deputy Director Paul Armentano in a new book published this week by Chelsea Green (<http://www.chelseagreen.com>).

Entitled *Marijuana Is Safer: So Why Are We Driving People to Drink*, it argues that the criminal prohibition of marijuana irrationally punishes adults who choose to indulge in a substance that is objectively less harmful than alcohol.

"Expert reviews by the World Health Organization, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and many others have each separately concluded that cannabis poses far less risk to the consumer than does alcohol," Armentano says. "It makes little sense for our society to condone, if not encourage, the use of alcohol – an intoxicant that directly contributes to tens of thousands of deaths annually and countless social problems – while simultaneously stigmatizing and criminalizing the use of cannabis, a substance that is incapable of causing lethal overdose and is associated with far fewer societal costs."

Those who have offered advance praise for the book include former Republican Governor of New Mexico Gary Johnson, best-selling author Barbara Ehrenreich, former American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) President Nadine Strossen, and former Seattle police chief Norm Stamper.

"From my own work and the experiences of other members of the law enforcement community, it is abundantly clear that marijuana is rarely, if ever, the cause of disruptive or violent behavior," Stamper writes in the book's foreword. "I am certain, whatever you may think about marijuana laws at this moment, that you will look at the issue differently by the time you reach the final chapter."

Says Armentano: "For those who may be initially skeptical of this message, *Marijuana Is Safer* will change the way you think about cannabis. And for

those who already support reforming America's draconian pot laws, this book will change the way you talk about marijuana." *Marijuana Is Safer* is co-authored by Steve Fox, Director of State Campaigns for the Marijuana Policy Project, and Mason Tvert, Executive Director of Safer Alternative for Enjoyable Recreation (SAFER). For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org or visit: <http://www.chelseagreen.com>.

## **Less Marijuana, More Booze Reported Among Pot Treatment Subjects, Study Says**

**Farmington, CT, USA:** Subjects undergoing treatment for so-called 'marijuana dependence' are likely to increase their consumption of alcohol, according to clinical trial data to be published in the journal *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*.

Investigators at the University of Connecticut (U-Conn) Health Center assessed the use of alcohol and cannabis among 207 subjects who met the DSM-IV criteria for marijuana dependence. (Subjects in the study were not designated as alcohol dependent.) Researchers documented the subjects' alcohol intake prior to undergoing marijuana treatment, and then again at 3-month intervals for one year.

Investigators reported: "On average, participants cut their marijuana use at least in half. At the same time, a considerable number increased their drinking by at least a small amount."

Specifically, authors found that "73 percent of cases reported an increase of at least 10 percent in drinking days over their level at intake, and 65 percent reported an increase of at least 10 percent in drinks per drinking day."

Nevertheless, authors noted that subjects' increased drinking habits were not necessarily proportional to their decrease in cannabis use. "Drinking increases were not related to treatment condition or change in marijuana use, but were related to baseline drinking," they wrote.

Following the completion of marijuana treatment, subjects' "drinking levels remained fairly stable throughout the follow-up year," investigators concluded. For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the study, "Increased drinking in a trial of treatments for marijuana dependence," will appear in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*.



News From *your* local affiliate of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws

## Marijuana Ingredient Blocks Opiate Dependence, Study Says

**Paris, France:** The administration of oral THC in rats suppresses sensitivity to opiate dependence, according to preclinical findings published in the June 24 issue of the journal *Neuropsychopharmacology*.

An international team of researchers from France and Canada assessed the impact oral THC (dronabinol) exposure in maternally deprived rats. (Rats that are deprived of their mothers immediately after birth are far more vulnerable to opiate dependence than non-deprived subjects.)

"[D]ronabinol treatment on maternally deprived rats normalized ... morphine consumption and suppressed sensitivity to morphine conditioning," researchers reported. "These findings point to the self-medication use of cannabis in subgroups of individuals subjected to adverse postnatal environment(s)."

Clinical data published this month in the July/August issue of the *American Journal on Addictions* reported that drug treatment subjects who used cannabis intermittently were more likely to adhere to treatment for opioid dependence.

Commenting on the studies, NORML Deputy Director Paul Armentano said,

"These findings undermine the notion that cannabis is a so-called 'gateway' to hard drug use. Rather, these results indicate that in certain populations marijuana may be a useful tool for deterring the initiation or continuation of hard drug abuse."

*For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the study, "Adolescent exposure to delta-9-THC blocks opiate dependence in maternally deprived rats," appears in Psychopharmacology.*

**\* NOTE! The Willamette Valley NORML Public meeting \* Happens every 4th Sat. of the month and will be at h'ERb'S Toasted Subs, 1210 Willamette St, Eugene call: 541.517-0957 -or- visit: <http://WillametteValleyNORML.org>**



*It's One Hell of A Joint!*

Visit - <http://herbstoastedsubs.com/> - and see!

## International Cannabinoid Research Society To Hold Annual Conference

**Chicago, IL, USA:** Over 250 researchers from around the globe will convene next week to attend the 19th Annual Symposium of the International Cannabinoid Research Society (ICRS). The three-day conference will take place from July 8 to July 11 at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois.

Scientific presentations include analyses of the therapeutic use of cannabinoids for the treatment of numerous conditions – including cancer, social anxiety disorder, alcoholism, acne, and stroke. The ICRS is a scientific association with over 400 members, all active researchers in the field of endogenous, plant-derived and synthetic cannabinoids. Registration information and conference agenda is available online at:

<http://cannabinoidsociety.org/SYMPOSIUM.2009/index.html>

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