

# Weed News

## Drug Policy Alliance: Senate Should Reject Nightmare Sessions

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January 10, 2017

In a statement sent to Senate offices the Drug Policy Alliance urged the Senate Judiciary Committee to reject Jeff Sessions for Attorney General. The committee is holding confirmation hearings on Sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday. Sessions favors hardline drug law enforcement approaches over emphasizing treatment and rehabilitation. He will likely escalate the failed war on drugs, and could interfere in states that have reformed their marijuana laws (including 15 states represented by Judiciary Committee members).

“Jeff Sessions is a nightmare,” said Bill Piper, senior director of national affairs for the Drug Policy Alliance. “He is a threat to progress, especially marijuana reform, sentencing reform, and asset forfeiture reform.”

In recent years, 28 states have legalized marijuana for medical use (including nine states represented by members of the Judiciary Committee). An additional 16 states, including six states represented by members of the Judiciary Committee, have legalized CBD oils, a non-psychoactive component of marijuana that has shown effectiveness in managing epileptic seizures that afflict children. Additionally, people who use marijuana in Louisiana with a doctor’s recommendation are protected from arrest. Eight states have voted to legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana like alcohol, including California (the home state of Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein).

Jeff Sessions has said “good people don’t smoke marijuana,” disparaging the tens of millions of Americans who have used marijuana, including the last three presidents. He has criticized the Justice Department’s guidance respecting state marijuana laws, and even opposes marijuana for medical use. If confirmed as Attorney General Sessions could increase marijuana arrests and prosecutions, threaten state officials, and undermine the ability of local agencies to regulate marijuana. In a recent article in the Hill, former Department of Justice officials and Session allies said states that voted to legalize marijuana “may be in for a reckoning.”

Sessions was the chief opponent of 2016 bipartisan efforts to reduce sentences for drug offenses, voting against the bill in committee. Sessions has also been critical of the Obama Justice Department’s guidelines around sentencing that were designed to limit harsh sentencing and reserve mandatory minimums for major offenders. He opposes “any” reform of civil asset forfeiture, a process that allows government agencies to seize money and property without having to charge anyone with a crime.

Last week the Drug Policy Alliance launched a digital campaign to put the brakes on Alabama Republican Senator Jeff Sessions' nomination for Attorney General. The Drug Policy Alliance campaign includes a new video launched on *The Root* that exposes Jeff Sessions' appalling record on drug policy, civil and human rights, and criminal justice reform.

The Drug Policy Alliance video, created by award-winning filmmaker dream hampton, alternates between archival media footage of Jeff Sessions' troubling racist words and actions, and DPA staff and allies talking about what Sessions would mean for drug policy and criminal justice. The video ends with a call to action asking people to call their Senators to reject Session for Attorney General.

Last month, the Drug Policy Alliance organized a teleconference for reporters to discuss Sessions' record on civil and human rights, criminal justice reform, and drug policy. Representatives from LatinoJustice, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the Council on American Islamic Relations, Cato Institute, the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference and the Drug Policy Alliance expressed their concerns about Sessions.

The Drug Policy Alliance is flooding Senate offices with phone calls and emails this week, urging senators to reject Sessions.

“Sessions is out of touch with the American people, and most members of Congress, who want sensible drug policy reform,” Piper said. “The Senate should reject him, so President-elect Trump can nominate someone who will support – not oppose – criminal justice reform.”