

Reply from U.S. Senator Mazie K. Hirono

U.S. Senator Mazie K. Hirono <Hirono.outgoing.mail@hirono.senate.gov>

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To: cliftonotto@hotmail.com <cliftonotto@hotmail.com>

MAZIE K. HIRONO
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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1104

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY &
NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS &
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Dear Mr. Otto,

Thank you for contacting me regarding federal marijuana enforcement policy. I appreciate hearing from you on this important issue.

Hawaii is one of a number of states that have legalized marijuana for medical and other uses. However, marijuana remains an illegal Schedule I drug under the federal Controlled Substances Act. As a result, states face difficulties in establishing, regulating, and enforcing marijuana policies. For example, businesses operating legally in states where marijuana has been partially or fully approved often have to rely on cash rather than federally-insured and regulated banks and credit unions. Relying on cash makes it harder for these businesses to operate and grow, makes them more susceptible to robbery and other criminal activities, and makes it harder for state and local regulators and law enforcement to appropriately oversee these businesses. These challenges can also limit therapeutic options for doctors, patients, and families facing illnesses that marijuana can help address.

Since 2013 the U.S. Department of Justice has issued conflicting policies regarding this issue, making it clear that Congress needs to act. In the 116th Congress (2019-2020) I cosponsored two bills that would update federal laws related to marijuana:

- The Compassionate Access, Research, Expansion and Respect (CARERS) Act, would revise the Controlled Substances Act by specifying that patients, providers, and businesses that operate legally within their State laws are not in violation of federal law. The bill also allows Veterans Administration doctors to prescribe marijuana to veterans in states where it is legal, expands opportunities for federal research into marijuana, and removes specific strains of cannabidiol (CBD) oil from the federal definition of marijuana, allowing them to be produced and sold as treatment for epilepsy and seizure disorders.
- The Secure and Fair Enforcement (SAFE) Banking Act would provide legal cannabis businesses with safe access to federally-regulated banking services, including bank accounts, the ability to accept credit cards, and securely transfer funds electronically, among other items.

These bills have yet to be reintroduced in the Senate for the 117th Congress. Please be assured that I will keep your views in mind as the U.S. Senate continues its engagement and oversight of these matters.

Again, thank you for contacting me. If you would like to stay in touch with me on this or other issues of importance to you, please visit my website at: <http://www.hirono.senate.gov>. Please do not hesitate to contact me again in the future if I may be of assistance to you in any way.

Aloha,



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

You can follow my work in the U.S. Senate on [Twitter](#). Additionally, please do not reply to this email as this mailbox unfortunately is for outgoing messages only. If you would like to contact me again, please visit my [website](#).