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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

June 30, 2003

Mr. Gary Storck
PO Box 3410
Madison, Wisconsin 53704

Dear Gary:

Thank you for contacting me regarding the legalization of marijuana for medical purposes. I appreciate hearing from you.

The use of marijuana for medicinal purposes is a contentious issue filled with conflicting scientific evidence, and I remain willing to listen to both sides of the debate. I understand that marijuana was once popularly recommended for various illnesses, although in recent years its medical use has declined. This decline is due to the increased availability of alternative medicines and the federal government's increasing role in curbing international drug importation and fighting domestic substance abuse.

I have heard from several medical professionals and citizens that, in a controlled environment, the benefits of the drug outweigh the possible risks to the patient. They present evidence that marijuana's chemical properties increase the quality of comfort and care afforded to patients suffering from illnesses such as cancer and AIDS.

Data from the Office of National Drug Control Policy, however, raises legitimate concerns as well. While illegal substance use has declined since the 1970s, marijuana has remained the most common drug among illicit users. If marijuana is to become a legal form of medication, further research and consideration must be given to both sides of the issue, and a consensus must be reached between the health care and law enforcement professions.

As you know, HR 2233, the States' Rights to Medical Marijuana Act, would transfer marijuana from schedule I of the Controlled Substances Acts to schedule II of the Act, thereby allowing states to set laws regarding the medical use of marijuana. At this time, I have decided not to cosponsor this bill. I realize that this is a difficult and important issue, and I believe reasonable people can have different views on the subject. Please be assured that I respect your opinion and will continue studying this issue.

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Again, thank you for contacting me. Should you have further questions or comments, I hope you will not hesitate to be in touch with my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Kind". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R" and "K".

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

RK:ed