

# National Black Church Initiative

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April 11, 2013  
**For Immediate Release**

## **NBCI Opposes Illinois Medical Marijuana Bill**

*Black Church Condemns Legalization of Gateway Drug as Dangerous*

**Washington DC** - The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) strongly opposes Illinois' Medical Marijuana Bill. The passage of this bill is a dangerously slippery slope toward legalization. The science that governs the issue of Medical Marijuana is conclusive - it is not safe and effective as medicine. Passage of this legislation has serious socioeconomic and cultural ramifications, and should be reconsidered by lawmakers who are erroneously giving into popular messaging that this illegal drug is a suitable substitute for sound medicine.

NBCI has over 3,700 member churches in the State of Illinois - many in Illinois. As concerned constituents, we are urging lawmakers to vote against the Medical Marijuana Bill. Marijuana has ravished the African American community to the point of destruction. It is chief poison causing our African American men to sit in city, county and federal jails and prisons. By voting for such a bill elected officials will be sending a message that marijuana is acceptable to be utilized for ambiguous medical purposes. This is the wrong message to send when over 65% of our young men and women who have either used or is presently experimenting with marijuana. It will lead to addiction, poor school scores and attendance, involvement with gangs, and decreased motivation.

Rev Anthony Evans, NBCI President says "Marijuana is a gateway drug and the Medical Marijuana Bill is no different. The Black Church is not in the business of creating an environment that gives our children an excuse to get high. Presently, there are so many societal roadblocks for African American youth. Giving them access to medical marijuana is the nail in the coffin, killing their chances of becoming a contributing member of society, a wife or a husband, a father or a mother and someone who can maintain steady employment."

One of the chief reasons why African American youths cannot find a job is that they cannot pass the urine test. The Black Church is not about to stand by and give them an excuse to get high

and to wreck their lives and harm others. We will not let you and other pseudo-scientists produce a generation of pot heads. The evidence underpinning medical marijuana's detrimental impact on society is strong:

While each state medical marijuana law differs, in Colorado a state with a population of 5.1 million there are 108,000 card holders-2% of the population. Michigan with 9.8 million residents has 130,000 medical marijuana users. Illinois has 12.8 million in population and, while states' cases vary, Illinois is likely to end up with at least 200,000 individuals high school senior age and older consuming excessive amounts of marijuana, an illegal drug under state and federal law. Hundreds of thousands more will buy or receive marijuana from these card holders, and states run the risk of gangs and illegal drug cartels selling greater amounts after this step towards legalization. Furthermore, there are FDA approved drugs including a marijuana pill, Marinol, available for patients with special needs which erases the need for wholesale marijuana legalization. NBCI urges lawmakers to consider these dire consequences before passing legislation that will further endanger African American Youth.

Vote No on HB1.

### **About NBCI**

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 34,000 churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI's mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches and the public. NBCI offers faith-based, out-of-the box and cutting edge solutions to stubborn economic and social issues. NBCI's programs are governed by credible statistical analysis, science based strategies and techniques, and methods that work. Visit our website at [www.naltblackchurch.com](http://www.naltblackchurch.com).