

## Pot

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marijuana for recreational purposes in such a way, though some have decriminalized it, and the initiative would put Washington squarely at odds with federal law banning

necessary to help ensure that people don't buy large amounts for resale in other states, she said.

The bill would not allow for the recre-

Activists would have until the end of this year to gather more than 240,000 signatures to get the initiative before the Legislature. Lawmakers will have a chance to approve it or allow it to go to the ballot.

Taxing marijuana sales would bring the state \$215 million a year, conservatively estimated, Holmes said.

Another group, Sensible Washington, is already pushing a legalization initiative this year that would remove all state criminal and civil penalties for marijuana use, possession and cultivation in any amount. Their effort is an initiative directly to the voters, meaning that if it qualifies for the November ballot and passes, it would become law without any input from the Legislature.

Sensible Washington failed to gather enough signatures to make the ballot last year, and Seattle medical marijuana attorney Douglas Hiatt, who leads the effort, said Tuesday he did not know whether their measure would qualify this year. Hiatt criticized the approach of the ACLU-led effort, saying it wouldn't allow Eastern Washington's farmers to grow hemp or really end prohibition at all. Furthermore, he said, the blood test limit for driving under the influence purposes - 5 nanograms of active THC per milliliter of blood - are so strict that most medical marijuana patients would fail even if they hadn't recently medicated.

Last year in California, voters rejected Proposition 19, which would have allowed for personal possession and growing of limited amounts of marijuana, 54 percent to 46

per-



phone interview from Idaho, where he was about to leave on a six-day rafting trip on the Salmon River, McKay said he has long considered marijuana prohibition a failed policy, but that as U.S. attorney his job was to enforce federal law, and he had no problem doing so. Among the people he prosecuted was Canada's so-called "Prince of Pot," Marc Emery, who fought extradition after his 2005 arrest but eventually was sentenced to five years in prison for selling millions of marijuana seeds to U.S. residents.

"When you look at alcohol prohibition, it took the states to say, 'This policy is wrong,'" McKay said. "This bill might not be perfect, but it's a good step forward. I think it will eventually shame Congress into action."

Holmes said McKay's involvement in the legalization effort helps demonstrate its sensibility.

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the drug.

The legislation would set limits on how much cannabis people can have: an ounce of dried bud, 16 ounces of marijuana-infused foods in solid form, and 72 ounces of marijuana-infused liquids, or all three, said Alison Holcomb, drug policy director of the ACLU of Washington. The limits are

ational growing of marijuana; it would be up to the state's Liquor Control Board to license grow operations and set limits for how large they can be. The measure would not affect the rights of medical marijuana patients in Washington, who are allowed to have at least 24 ounces and 15 plants, and more if needed.

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## Hip Hop

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every state in the U.S. and in every nation in the global community to demand more "progressive" change. There are strong winds of repression now blowing from those who want to deny the future advancement of humanity. 2012 is fast approaching in the United States and the Tea Party is gearing up to take America backward. HSN along with the Hip-Hop Caucus and other organizations will have to mobilize once again. The Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Republican National Committee should both be challenged to ensure a large youth voter turnout in 2012. If we have learned anything during the past 10 years, it is that all of us should be willing to give more and do more to insure freedom, justice, equality, and empowerment for all.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is Senior Advisor for the Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO) and President of Education Online Services Corporation.

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