

## Presbyterian Church Endorses Medical Marijuana

Contributed by Bruce Mirken

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church June 21 became the latest US religious body to endorse legal access to medical marijuana for seriously ill patients. The church joins the United Methodist Church, Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ, Union for Reform Judaism, Progressive National Baptist Convention, and Unitarian Universalist Association in support of medical marijuana.

The Presbyterian resolution, passed by consensus, affirms "the use of cannabis sativa or marijuana for legitimate medical purposes as recommended by a physician" and urges "federal legislation that allows for its use and that provides for the production and distribution of the plant for those purposes." (Text at <http://72.54.6.218/Business/Business.aspx?iid=134>.)

"Being seriously ill is stressful enough already without living in fear of arrest for taking doctor-recommended medicine," said Rev. Jim McNeil, a representative of the Homestead Presbytery in Nebraska, the regional body that brought the resolution to the General Assembly. "It is the job of religious denominations to give voice to those who cannot speak up for themselves. We pray that Congress will have the compassion to stop this war on patients."

"This action by the Presbyterian Church is further proof that protecting medical marijuana patients is simply not controversial," said Aaron Houston, director of government relations for the Marijuana Policy Project (mpp.org).

"A lot of people mistakenly believe that the issue of medical marijuana is 'incendiary,' but that's simply not true. An overwhelming majority of Americans want cancer and AIDS patients to be able to use medical marijuana under their doctors' care, and it's time for Congress to listen to the voters."