

## Mayoral race heats up

Contributed by Richard Lee

Will Ron Dellums run for mayor of Oakland? If he does he will be one more candidate that supports taxing and regulating cannabis for adults, similarly to alcohol.

Dellums (US Rep. 1970-1998) has been an advisory board member of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, NORML. He has announced an exploratory committee for the mayor's race, and Oakland is buzzing with the possibilities of this curve ball no one saw coming.

Nancy Nadel, Oakland's city councilperson and the presumed front-runner, endorsed Measure Z and has been working to see it implemented. She has led the effort to revitalize the Uptown area into a pedestrian friendly arts and entertainment district for many years. Plans for the area include widening sidewalks to allow cafes space for outside seating. This dovetails with the Oakland vision of sidewalk cannabis cafes to make the area safer and busy on weekends.

Mayoral Candidate Dan Siegel also endorsed Measure Z and has been appointed to the Oakland Cannabis Regulation and Revenue Ordinance Oversight Committee by councilperson Desley Brooks. When harassed for having a small amount of cannabis, he did not see it as a liability to his campaign, after 65% of Oakland voted last year to end cannabis prohibition.

Even long time medical marijuana opponent, councilman Ignacio DeLa Fuente sees that to become Oakland's Mayor he will have to soften his opposition to treating cannabis consumers the same as alcohol patrons. During a recent meeting with Cal Norml Executive Director Dale Gieringer, De La Fuente repeated that he was now "open minded and practical" on the issue of cannabis law reform.

Whoever wins next summer, it appears that the new mayor will be an improvement over Mayor Brown, who is now running for Attorney General.