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SCHAKOWSKY: "THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO GET OUT OF THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE AND LET PATIENTS GET THE HELP THEY NEED"

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) joined Republicans and Democrats in calling for passage of H.R. 2592, a bill that would prohibit the federal government from interfering with states' rights in regard to medical marijuana. At a news conference organized by U.S. Representative Barney Frank (D-MA), the lead sponsor of H.R. 2592, the members heard from former Reagan Administration official Lyn Nofziger, who spoke of his late daughter's struggle, patients, and family members of those who rely on marijuana to deal with acute pain.

"It is a sad day when patients are held hostage to a misguided policy that has much more to do with politics than science. The federal government needs to get out of the doctor's office and let patients get the help they need," Schakowsky said.

Below is Schakowsky's statement:

I am proud to be here today with Representative Frank and my colleagues to speak on this critical issue that is so important to thousands of people who are in great suffering and are looking to us for help.

It is a sad day when patients are held hostage to this misguided policy that is much more about politics than science. The federal government needs to get out of the doctor's office and let patients get the help they need.

HR 2592 guarantees the rights of states to determine their own laws and how best to provide those suffering from debilitating illnesses with alternative methods to ease their pains. And that means the right of doctors to prescribe medical marijuana.

John Ashcroft should be concentrating on putting behind bars Enron and WorldCom thieves who stole millions from the American people instead of Doctors who are relieving the pain of people who are afflicted with grave medical conditions. They can't eat; they can't sleep, and they are experiencing acute and unbearable pain. I guess Ashcroft did not get the memo about being a compassionate conservative.

Every day doctors prescribe potent and addictive drugs like codeine and morphine to patients across the country to help ease their pain, live in dignity, and improve their quality of life. In some instances, these drugs don't work, and the medical community has agreed that medical marijuana does.

We could be here asking you, Mr. Ashcroft, to just say yes. We are not. We are not

asking you to lead. We are not asking you to follow. We are asking you to get out of the way. Get out of the way of voters, states, and doctors who want to provide compassionate care to people who need it.