

Blumenauer Announces Co-Chairs of Congressional Cannabis Caucus for 116th Congress

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Press Release

Washington, DC – Representative Earl Blumenauer (OR-03), a leading advocate for cannabis policy reform and founder and co-chair of the Congressional Cannabis Caucus, today announced the launch of the Caucus for the 116th Congress. The Caucus leadership team includes Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA), who will become the first woman of color to Co-Chair the Caucus; Representative Dave Joyce (R-OH), who newly joins the leadership team; and returning Co-Chair, Representative Don Young (R-AK-At-Large).

The bipartisan Caucus provides a forum for members of the U.S. House of Representatives to discuss, learn, and work together to establish a better and more rational approach to federal cannabis policy.

“The Cannabis Caucus was the first of its kind to create a forum for elected officials to collaborate on ways to address our outdated federal marijuana laws” said **Rep. Blumenauer**. “Congress is clearly out of step with the American people on cannabis when national support for federal marijuana legalization is at an all-time high and we saw several states move toward legalization last November.”

“Over the last decade, I’ve worked to build understanding and consensus on the need for reform and our movement is cresting. I’m looking forward to working alongside Reps. Lee, Joyce and Young to build on the bipartisan work we’ve done to end the senseless federal prohibition on marijuana once and for all.”

“For far too long, communities of color and women have been left out of the conversation on cannabis. I am committed to ensuring that marijuana reform goes hand-in-hand with criminal justice reform so we can repair some of the harm of the failed War on Drugs. We must also work to build an industry that is equitable and inclusive of the communities most impacted by cannabis prohibition,” said **Rep. Lee**.

“I’m proud to join my colleagues in leading the effort to implement responsible, commonsense cannabis policies,” said **Rep. Joyce**. “It is critical that we protect the rights of the states across the country, like Ohio, that have already done so at the state level. The federal government’s interference in this arena has stifled important medical research, interfered with doctors and patients making treatment decisions and harmed state-legal businesses. I look forward to working with Congressman Blumenauer, Congressman Young and Congresswoman Lee to advance sensible cannabis reforms that will benefit our nation’s veterans, patients, and businesses across the country.”

“Since the initial launch of the Congressional Cannabis Caucus we’ve seen an exponential growth in interest, legislation, and membership many would not have expected”, **said Rep. Young**. “The idea of States’ Rights has been a central tenet of this movement and one that I believe will ultimately carry the day. I encourage all Members to join us in this debate and explore the varying issues.”

“It’s good to be back with Representative Blumenauer, showing that bipartisanship can still shine. I’d also like to welcome Representatives Joyce and Lee as Co-Chairs of this important Caucus and I know they’ll be as asset. They follow in the footsteps of former Representatives Rohrabacher and Polis, who helped make this all possible with their long standing advocacy and dedication and we wish them the best.”

Background:

Federal cannabis laws are increasingly out of touch with the American people. Ninety-eight percent of Americans now live in states or territories that permit, to varying degrees, legal access to medical marijuana, and/or cannabis derivatives, with even more states considering expanded access this year. Additionally, a quarter of all Americans now live in a state with legal access to the adult use of marijuana. It’s time for Congress to catch up, and the Congressional Cannabis Caucus is another step in the right direction.