

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 27, 2014

The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Holder:

As Members of Congress from New York State, we urge you to grant New York State the ability to obtain much-needed medical marijuana treatments for children with epileptic and seizure disorders. In the most severe cases, afflicted children can experience dozens or even hundreds of full body seizures every day, leading to broken bones, brain damage, and even death. For children suffering from these disorders and for their families, these treatments are the only potential option to reduce the frequency and severity of seizures and provide hope. However, in the absence of action, treatments will continue being denied to those in need.

Earlier this year, New York State enacted a law establishing a well-regulated medical marijuana program; however, under the law the program will not take full effect until January 2016. During this interim period, many New York families are struggling to treat children with conditions like refractory epilepsy that have been shown to be responsive to cannabidiol, a plant extract that has no psychoactive properties. Since July, at least three children have died from complications related to epilepsy that was resistant to standard therapies. Because cannabidiol is not yet available in New York, the State is seeking other options to bring relief to these families and children.

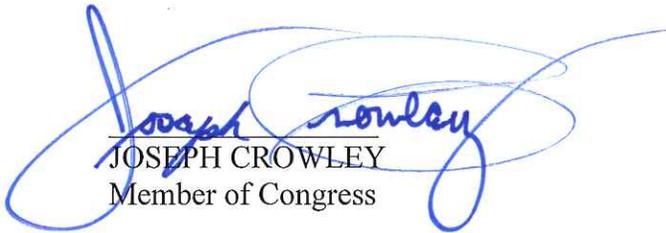
In August, New York State asked the Department of Justice to provide a narrow, time-limited authorization to securely import cannabidiol from states with legal medical marijuana programs already in place. This proposed solution would not allow private importation – it would only permit the official, state government of New York to import just what is used to serve families in genuine need, and the State has made clear that they will stop all importation once New York's own program is operational. By allowing a limited opportunity for this product to be transported between states, your department will enable this treatment to reach suffering families and eliminate uncertainty and fear of federal prosecution.

We understand that concerns have been raised over whether cannabidiol must first receive approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration before being imported. While we appreciate this concern for safety and efficacy, this product is currently being used with success within other states, and New Yorkers suffering from severe epilepsy should have the same opportunity to receive this herbal remedy.

Additionally, while a clinical trial of cannabidiol is underway, expanding the trial is not a feasible solution to the immediate problem. The trial's specific clinical criteria limits and constricts the eligible population, and the large scale required to fully meet the need in New York is well beyond the scope of this study.

Every day makes a difference for children with these severe disorders. Given this urgent public health need, we urge you to allow New York the ability to import finite and strictly controlled amounts of cannabidiol. This commonsense solution will make a tremendous difference in the lives of our constituents throughout New York State, and we appreciate your attention to this issue.

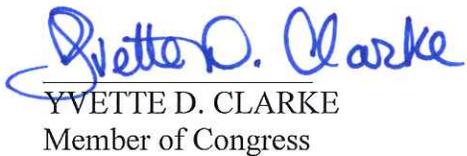
Sincerely,



JOSEPH CROWLEY
Member of Congress



TIMOTHY H. BISHOP
Member of Congress



YVETTE D. CLARKE
Member of Congress



CHRIS COLLINS
Member of Congress



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Member of Congress



RICHARD L. HANNA
Member of Congress



BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress



HAKEEM S. JEFFRIES
Member of Congress



DANIEL B. MAFFEI
Member of Congress



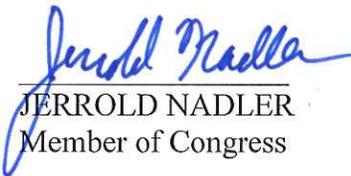
CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress



CAROLYN MCCARTHY
Member of Congress



GRACE MENG
Member of Congress



JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress



WILLIAM L. OWENS
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