

# I-502: The Road to Recreational Marijuana Use in Washington?

In November of 2012, Americans will take to the polls to decide elections for national and state offices, and Washingtonians will also determine if the state will legalize and regulate the recreational use of marijuana through Initiative 502.

The initiative would make it legal for people 21-years-old and up to possess up to one ounce of marijuana bought from state-licensed stores. Like alcohol, the state Liquor Control Board would regulate the sale of marijuana.

I-502 is receiving a broad range of support, including from several current and former government employees. The Seattle Times reports that I-502 is supported by a retired FBI supervisor, public-health officials, Seattle's mayor and City Council, the state's Democratic Party, and numerous judges.

In 1998, medical marijuana was legalized in the state through ballot initiative. While a lot of the proponents of medicinal marijuana are also in favor of legalizing the recreational use of marijuana, many have reservations about I-502 — specifically the initiative's proposed DUI provisions.

## Driving Under the Influence

Under I-502, the legal limit for driving under the influence of marijuana would be 5 nanograms of THC (the active ingredient in marijuana) per milliliter of blood — drivers under the age of 21 would be subject to a zero-tolerance standard.

It is contended that the proposed level would essentially make it impossible for users of medicinal marijuana to drive. The regular use of marijuana allows THC to build up in the body; therefore, many users of medicinal marijuana may have levels of THC in their system higher than the legal limit, even though they are not impaired.

Currently, it is illegal to drive under the influence of drugs in the state of Washington. Drivers found guilty of driving under the influence of drugs face the loss of their driver's license, fines and jail time.

The consequences of being found guilty of DUI are very severe. If you have been accused of driving under the influence of drugs, speak with an experienced criminal defense attorney. An attorney will help you through the legal process, be a strong advocate on your behalf and protect your legal rights.