FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Improved housing protection for Hawai‘i Medical Marijuana patients becomes law 11/1/14

10/30/14 - Honolulu, Hawai‘i: The Medical Cannabis Coalition of Hawai‘i ("MCCHI") welcomes the enactment of Act 60, which, as of 11/1/14, voids provisions in Hawai‘i rental agreements that previously would have allowed eviction of a tenant based on their status as a registered patient with Hawai‘i’s medical marijuana program.

Medical Cannabis Coalition of Hawai‘i and Drug Policy Action Group Executive Director Rafael Kennedy said: "With 88% of voters in strong support of Hawai‘i’s 15 year-old medical marijuana program, it’s really encouraging to see this issue stepping into the light. Housing is a core issue for many people. It’s incredibly expensive and can be hard to come by, especially on Oahu. Patient-renters should never have to live in fear of eviction just because of private decisions about medication. This bill goes a long way to fixing that - and people need to know about it to protect their rights. Medical marijuana patients want to be good neighbors. If smoking is not allowed in a building, then neither is smoked cannabis. Increasingly, medical marijuana is consumed without smoking at all, including methods like vaporizing, juicing, oils and tinctures, and edibles. These do not fall under any smoking ban provision."

The law also makes an exception for condominiums or community associations that entirely prohibit the use of medical marijuana in their rules - but advocates see a lot of down side and not a lot of upside to that idea. Kennedy continued: "A community association that rejects tenants based on the medications they choose will find itself very much behind the times. Medical marijuana is not a crime - it is, and has been, legal in Hawai‘i for 15 years. Patients and caregivers are everywhere, in every walk of life. Especially in a "graying" state like Hawai‘i as our seniors ever increasingly are making plans to "age in place," the right approach is for rental agents to welcome medical marijuana patients as they would any other tenant. We plan to work to expand these protections, helping ensure that medical cannabis patients in Hawai‘i are treated fairly by the law."
People renting or living in government-subsidized housing may not experience the same protections this law affords people renting in the private sector.

The Medical Cannabis Coalition of Hawai‘i is a confidential, local support group and advocate for patients, caregivers and doctors accessing Hawai‘i’s medical marijuana program. Founding members include the Drug Policy Action Group and the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai‘i. Patients, doctors and caregivers are urged to join the confidential support network “The Medical Cannabis Coalition of Hawai‘i” founded by the Drug Policy Action Group and the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai‘i and follow the latest news at www.mcchi.org.

###

**The Drug Policy Action Group**, founded in 2004, is a sister organization to the 20 year old Drug Policy Forum of Hawai‘i. Its mission is to advocate for effective, non-punitive drug policies that minimize economic, social and human costs and to encourage pragmatic approaches based on science and concern for human dignity.

**The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai‘i** has been the state’s guardian of liberty since 1965, working daily in the courts, legislatures and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties equally guaranteed to all by the Constitutions and laws of the United States and Hawai‘i.