



## NEW JERSEY SENATE

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March 24, 2010

The Honorable Christopher J. Christie  
Governor  
State of New Jersey  
State House  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Christie,

Last week John Ray Wilson, suffering from the chronic disease multiple sclerosis (MS), was sentenced to five years in prison for growing marijuana FOR HIS OWN USE. There was no evidence provided by the prosecution during his trial that anyone else used the marijuana he grew in his backyard in order to find a small measure of relief from his chronic illness.

What's the COST to the state and what PURPOSE is served by this imprisonment?

Judge Reed gave Mr. Wilson the lowest possible sentence for the second-degree crime of drug manufacturing, but sentenced him to three years in prison for marijuana possession – three years in prison for marijuana possession to treat the pain he was suffering from MS and for which he could not afford prescription drugs since he had no health insurance.

That is cruel, unusual and unnecessary.

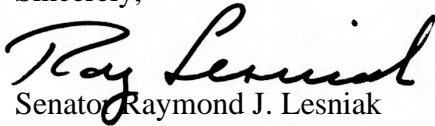
The state used poor judgment in charging Mr. Wilson with drug manufacturing. It may have been technically correct in doing so, but the charges failed to recognize the intent of the statute was not directed at punishing a chronic disease sufferer who grew marijuana for his own use to ease the pain for which he could not afford pain-easing medication. The decision to bring drug manufacturing charges against Mr. Wilson demonstrates a clear case of absence of prosecutorial discretion.

The power of pardon and sentence commutation vested in the governor is designed to correct this type of result. The only good coming from allowing this sentence to stand is that Mr. Wilson will now be able to get the pain-easing drugs he could not afford in freedom, but now at the taxpayers' expense.

We urge you to pardon Mr. Wilson from the second-degree offense and commute his prison sentence to a period of supervised probation.

Doing the right thing and saving taxpayer dollars. It doesn't get much better than that.

Sincerely,

  
Senator Raymond J. Lesniak

  
Senator Nicholas P. Scutari