

## Operation FREE

Sen. John Warner, and Jon Powers, Iraq veteran, listen to Rep. Alex Cornell du Houx (third from left) speak about Operation FREE at a recent White House press conference. Cornell du Houx, from Solon, arranged the event where over 150 veterans took action on their new mission: Operation FREE, dedicated to improving national security with strong climate change legislation.  
(Ramona du Houx photo)



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have to admit it was actually quite comical to watch my mom, a cigarette smoker for years, stretch her head out the screen door, take a toke and try not to choke. It didn't take her long to admit she did feel better. She could hold food down, wasn't nearly as nauseous, and therefore wasn't spending as much time on the bathroom floor or hanging out the car door. As things began to wind down for her, I think the only thing she'd acknowledge now, if she could, was the morphine was even better at relieving her distress.

That November, following mom's death, I was grateful that Maine voters were progressive enough to approve a bill to recognize marijuana for medicinal use. Eight years later, while going to the polls to vote, I was met at the door with another very similar petition. What had happened? The answer to my dismay; not very much!

I guess I'm not surprised by the countrywide effort to restrict the use of marijuana as an alternative to its synthetic substitutes. Pharmaceutical companies can control and profit from the manufactured substance but cannot own the rights to a living plant. The natural version is a major losing proposition for the medical field, manufacturers and distributors because people can treat themselves using a substance not controlled by these corporations.

Question 5 on the November Ballot is The Maine Medical Marijuana Initiative. It clears up the ambiguity from the bill passed in 1999, which the organization, Maine Citizens for Patients Rights, admits was poorly written ([mainepatientsrights.org](http://mainepatientsrights.org)).

Despite Maine voters' approval of a Medical Marijuana Law, there is still no legal ways to dispense the "natural" version to those who qualify to use it and doctors have their hands tied with laws that don't allow them to legally prescribe it. The Initiative simply allows an alternative to the synthetic version, when natural ingredients are either preferred or is the best choice for the patient and the illness he or she is facing. Something many of us thought we were approving 10 years ago.

I'm supporting the Maine Medical Marijuana Initiative this November because I want to have the legal choice that my mom didn't have. I don't plan to be hugging a toilet bowl if life deals me a bad card and I think I should be able to do it legally! I don't know many people who, when facing a debilitating illness or in their final days, wouldn't choose whatever gave them the safest, most reliable relief and more importantly, the most dignity. Please Vote YES on Question 5!

*Nancy E Teel is a resident of Farmington*

Editor's note: The works Teel cited in her commentary include: <http://forum.grasscity.com/medical-marijuana/69100-marinol-vs-natural-cannabis.html>; <http://www.askapatient.com/viewrating.asp?drug=18651&name=MARINOL>; <http://www.themarinol.com/marijuana-vs-marinol.php>; <http://exceptionmag.com/politics/perspectives/000711/case-maines-medical-marijuana-initiative>; <http://www.mainepatientsrights.org/>

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And we want to give Augusta MORE power?? And why aren't school employees concerned with local control voting YES on 4? TABOR II does not affect school budgets. Maine's voters already have a vote on ALL school budgets, not just the rising budgets TABOR targets. By logic alone, every school employee in Maine should be voting for TABOR, which is less restrictive than current law. Schools aren't going to get any more money out of state government. The voters have already voted twice to force the state to fund 55 percent, but that money has already been given to the welfare department, so people arriving here from away can get lifetime welfare benefits starting the day they step off the bus.

Why aren't these facts known? There are about 160 organizations which have rallied against TABOR II and about 83 percent of them get between 40 and 99 percent of their funding from the government, from the taxpayers. The anti-TABORistas are outspending TABOR supporters by well over FIVE to one. How can the truth compete with that?

The political reality is that every program and policy puts money in the hands of some part of the populations.

It does not matter if the program fails in its original intent; it is a success for people who profit from it. When you spend money to fund a scheme you create a constituency which will defend it regardless of your original intent. Politicians like to smile and be smiled upon. They get no smiles from cutting.

Spending is fun. Cutting is not fun. We all know this, and any of us elected to office would experience the same feelings.

It's this simple. There are no lobbyists working for the ordinary taxpayer. Legislators are influenced more by organized special interests than by unorganized taxpayers. TABOR II puts power directly in the hands of the taxpayer. They are free to sanction tax increases if they wish. Will they make mistakes? Maybe so. Will they foul things up as badly as our Masters in Augusta? Not a chance.

*Professor John Frary of Farmington, Maine, is a former U.S. Congress candidate and retired history professor, a Board Member of Maine Taxpayers United and an associate editor of the International Military Encyclopedia, and can be reached at: [jfrary8070@aol.com](mailto:jfrary8070@aol.com).*

## We urge you to **SpeakUP**



### Help Avoid Mistakes with Your Medicines

Everyone has a role in making health care safe. As a patient, you can make your care safer by being an active, involved and informed member of your health care team.

### Medicine mistakes happen every day. Below are questions to ask your doctor or pharmacist:

- How will this new medicine help you?
- Are there other names for this medicine. For example, does it have a brand or generic name?
- Is there any written information about the medicine?
- Can you take this medicine with your allergy? Remind your doctor about your allergies and reactions you have had to medicine.
- Is it safe to take this medicine with your other medicines? Is it safe to take with vitamins, herbs, and supplements?
- Are there any side effects of the medicine, such as upset stomach? Who can you call if you have side effects or a bad reaction? Can they be reached 24/7?



*Speak Up is a program of The Joint Commission. The Joint Commission is the largest health care accrediting body in the United States that promotes quality and safety.*

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