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TO: Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
FROM: Carl Bergquist, Executive Director
HEARING DATE: 27 February 2017, 10AM
RE: SB997, Relating to the Uniformed Controlled Substances Act

Dear Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Rhoads and Committee Members:

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawai'i (DPFHI) submits the following comments for your consideration. We ask that the Department of Public Safety use its authority and seriously evaluate the danger posed by cannabis, currently listed as a Schedule I drug indicating the "highest degree of danger". An honest evaluation of this drug, which thousands of patients have been using since it was approved as a form of medicine in our state nearly two decades ago, can only conclude that something is amiss here.

Further, we note that cannabis is listed neither as a "dangerous" drug nor even as a "harmful" one for enforcement and sentencing purposes. Instead, cannabis is considered a "detrimental" drug, putting it alongside all Schedule V drugs that include certain dosages of codeine etc mixed with nonnarcotic drugs as well as stimulants/depressants not listed in Schedules I-IV.

Finally, as far as we can tell, there is nothing in the requirements of the Cole Memorandum that requires keeping cannabis a state schedule I drug. In other words, rescheduling cannabis is compliant with this memo's stipulation that a tightly regulated ship is needed to keep federal enforcement at bay.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.