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Medical Cannabis Legislation in Illinois House Passes

With the passage of House Bill 1, the “Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Act,” sponsored by Rep. Lou Lang, D-Skokie, in the Illinois House, patients would be allowed to relieve their debilitating symptoms with cannabis, according to their doctors’ advice, without facing arrest and incarceration.

“We applaud the Illinois House on their action today. The medical cannabis industry has the potential to bring good paying jobs with benefits, all while providing medicine that improves the standard of living for people with chronic and serious medical conditions,” said Ron Powell, President, Local 881 and UFCW International Vice President. “As part of the retail healthcare industry, medical cannabis is a natural fit for growth in the retail industry where medical cannabis can be sold with professionalism, thru dispensaries, and respect for the patients. Workers will be able to exercise their right to unite and legitimize their profession. We encourage the Illinois Senate to follow suit in passing this important piece of legislation.”

The legislation would make Illinois the 19th state to allow medical cannabis. The medical cannabis industry, now in 18 states plus the District of Columbia, is known for its passionate community of workers, patients and business leaders. The UFCW and its members have been working relentlessly to stabilize the industry, bring good jobs to workers and build community based on compassion and common goals. It has become increasingly successful at simultaneously bringing dignity and strength to industry workers and the enterprises they work in. UFCW members in the medical cannabis industry work in accordance with state laws to provide safe and effective medical treatment for qualifying patients.

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Local 881 UFCW represents 34,000 members employed in retail food and drug stores throughout Illinois and Northwest Indiana, as well as a professional division comprised of health and nursing home workers, barbers and cosmetologists, and workers in other retail and service industries. Among the companies under contract with Local 881 are Jewel Food Stores, Osco Drug, Dominick’s Finer Foods, Mariano’s Fresh Market, CVS Pharmacy, Kroger, Schnucks, and many smaller chains and independent stores, as well as nursing homes and other business establishments. Local 881 is among the largest affiliates of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, which represents 1.3 million members in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.