

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Senator Terrence Nelson Proposes Hemp Growing Bill, Medical Marijuana Referendum

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Senator Terrence Positive Nelson has been pushing hard to pass legislation that would ultimately make it legal to produce, sell and research hemp in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and also the use of Medicinal Marijuana.

In 2012, the Senator was successful in placing a referendum on territory-wide election ballots that sort to find the stance of the people on hemp, however although the results were in the Senator's and supporters of the referendum's favor, with 57 percent voting in yes, the majority wasn't enough to make a hemp industry legal in the territory. According to the Elections System's online records, of the 7,933 people who voted, 4,599 voted in favor of the idea.

This time, Senator Terrence 'Positive' Nelson hopes, more people will vote on the referendum to be placed on the November 4th, 2014 general election ballots.

The bill, which seeks to amend VI agriculture laws, Tittle 7 of VI Code, comes at a time when states across the U.S. are making bold moves to legalize Medicinal Marijuana, and hemp is already legal in various states across the U.S. Yet while hemp is a legal industry in many U.S. states, the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration is still hostile towards its use, and farmers in states such as North Dakota, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Oregon, California, Montana, West Virginia and Vermont have not yet begun to grow it.

Apart from bills pushing to the legalize hemp and Medicinal Marijuana industries, Nelson is also the sponsor of a bill that seeks to decriminalize possession of small amounts of marijuana, an idea which sparks passionate responses from clergy members, parents, teachers and other segments of the society, especially those dealing with teens and young adults affected by the use of the drug on a daily basis.

As for the hemp bill, Nelson believes that 2012's referendum spoke volumes as to the mood of the people on the matter, saying on Wednesday that it gives him "the catalyst to keep moving forward with that measure and that's why we have the bill being heard now."

Senator Nelson will be seeking reelection on November 4th as a member of the 31st Legislation of the United States Virgin Islands, as an Independent Citizens Movement (ICM).