

Hillary Clinton Fundraiser Seeks Marijuana License In Illinois

December 11, 2014



When Bill Clinton was running for president in 1992, he famously told an interviewer that he “experimented with marijuana a time or two” as a younger man – but “didn’t inhale.”

Turns out one of Hillary Clinton’s former top fundraisers, Chicago businessman David Rosen, wants to give people the ability to inhale, though lawfully. One of his businesses is applying for one or more licenses from the Quinn administration to enter the newly legalized medical marijuana industry in Illinois, the Better Government Association has learned.

Documents from Winnebago County show a Rosen company, Waveseer, is seeking permission from state government to obtain a medical marijuana cultivation license so it can grow pot plants near Rockford.

Rosen was campaign finance director for Hillary Clinton's successful New York senatorial campaign in 2000 and Pat Quinn's first election for Illinois governor in 2010.

Rosen didn't want to talk publicly to the BGA about his medical marijuana plans, and didn't want to say what his role might be if Hillary Clinton runs for president in 2016.

"I'm just a lay leader," Rosen said. "I'm a businessman that supports Democrats."

State government passed a pilot program for medicinal marijuana in 2013 and is now reviewing applications for growers and sellers - with winning bidders announced as soon as this week, and almost certainly before Governor-elect Bruce Rauner takes office next month, officials said.

In all, the state can award up to 21 licenses for cultivation facilities, and up to 60 licenses for storefronts where marijuana can be sold to patients with prescriptions. Doctors can prescribe the drug for people suffering from a variety of ailments, from cancer to glaucoma to AIDS and Parkinson's.

While advocates for medical marijuana say the drug's availability should improve the quality of life for the sick, law enforcement has raised concerns about increased crime, more impaired driving and not enough research on the impacts of this burgeoning sector.

Either way, because of the potentially lucrative nature of the industry, competition has been fierce for licenses, and Rosen isn't the only applicant with political connections. [Last month, the BGA reported](#) former state senator and failed candidate for governor Kirk Dillard, who voted against the medical marijuana bill while in the Illinois Senate, is advising a group bidding for cultivation licenses in Will and Kankakee counties.

READ MORE: [Former Legislator Opposed Medical Pot, Now Advises Would-Be Grower](#)

Kirk Dillard, a former state senator and the current chairman of the RTA, has opposed legalizing medical marijuana in Illinois. So why is he now advising a group vying to grow medical pot here?

The legalization of marijuana - outright, or for medical purposes - is a hot topic across the country.

Waveseer, for instance, vied to provide medicinal pot in Nevada, which recently overhauled its medical marijuana law.

A son of outgoing U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) was an attorney for Waveseer in Nevada, but he apparently is not involved in Illinois.

Rosen was indicted on federal charges for allegedly underreporting the actual cost of a 2000 fundraiser for Hillary Clinton in Los Angeles that included Hollywood stars. He was acquitted of the charges in 2005.