



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY
Washington, D.C. 20503

December 15, 2008

Nathan Miller, Esq.
Legislative Analyst
Marijuana Policy Project
P.O. Box 77492—Capitol Hill
Washington, D.C. 20013

Dear Mr. Miller:

I am in receipt of your Petition for Correction of Information Publicly Disseminated by ONDCP dated October 16, 2008 regarding ONDCP's publication *2008 Marijuana Sourcebook: Marijuana: The Greatest Cause of Illegal Drug Abuse*. I am ONDCP's Chief Scientist and Director of the Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center (CTAC); the *Sourcebook* was produced under my direction. According to your petition "the *Sourcebook's* title—along with the gateway theory as it has been applied to marijuana by ONDCP, is the only information being challenged" by the Marijuana Policy Project.

As you are aware, ONDCP has published guidelines for information quality in accordance with the *Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated by Federal Agencies* that are pursuant to Section 515 of the Treasury and General Appropriations Act for FY2001 (Public Law 106-554; HR 5658). These guidelines identify the policies and procedures for ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information disseminated by ONDCP. Section IV Definitions notes that:

"Information," for purposes of these guidelines, including the administrative mechanism described in Sections II and III, above, means any communication or representation of facts or data, in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual forms. This definition does not include:

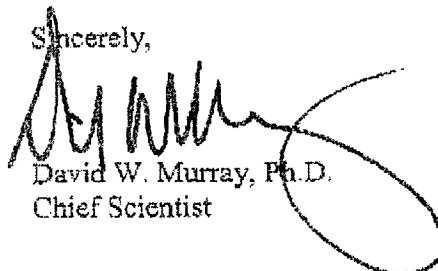
- (a) opinions or policy, where the presentation makes clear that the statements are subjective opinions, rather than facts. Underlying information upon which the opinion or policy is based may be subject to these guidelines only if that information is published by ONDCP.

The data cited in the *Sourcebook* is factual and well-documented; with respect to the title of the *Sourcebook*, ONDCP considers this to be a matter of policy, and therefore not subject to a correction under the Information Quality Guidelines. Further, ONDCP does not agree that the use of the word "cause" in the title is synonymous with the gateway theory as discussed in your petition—in fact, the gateway theory is not mentioned in the *Sourcebook*. Rather, ONDCP used "cause" in the title of the *Sourcebook* in the sense of the greatest "explanation", "source", or "reason" for illegal drug use. The accuracy of this title is clearly supported by data from the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health which indicates that nearly three-quarters of all


illegal drug abuse is use of marijuana. No other illegal drug comes close to marijuana in terms of prevalence of use.

I appreciate your interest in ONDCP's publications and desire for accuracy in them. I assure you that as ONDCP's Chief Scientist and CTAC Director, I share your concern and take my responsibility to ensure the accuracy of all of ONDCP's research publications seriously.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Murray", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

David W. Murray, Ph.D.
Chief Scientist

	<p>ONDCP - OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL</p>
<p>To: Nathan Miller</p> <p>From: Edward Jurith General Counsel</p>	
<p>Date: 12-16-08</p> <p>Pages: 2 + Cover</p>	
<p>Regarding: Data Quality Petition (MPP)</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	