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Activist arrested at Albuquerque airport

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. NOVEMBER 15, 2009 — A Washington State medical marijuana activist was arrested at the Albuquerque airport today after refusing to show ID to TSA screeners. Activist Phil Mocek is one of many Americans who believe Americans have a right to travel freely between the states without showing their papers to the federal government.

Mocek was tabling at the 2009 International Drug Policy Reform Conference for a Seattle-based activist group called the Cannabis Defense Coalition. The event was attended by over one thousand people, including New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, and former Governor Gary Johnson.

At the Albuquerque airport for his flight back to Seattle, Mocek politely refused to show his ID to a TSA screener, who called in a supervisor. Mocek started recording with his digital camera, which caused the TSA supervisor to become extremely agitated. The police were called in, with six officers arriving on the scene. Mocek was immediately arrested. Another Seattle activist, Jesse Gallagos, was traveling with Mocek, and was driven in a police cruiser to the edge of the Albuquerque airport, dropped off, and told he was banned from flying for 24 hours.

Like many Americans, Mocek has flown for years without showing ID to federal officials. He made headlines last year for questioning security measures at Kansas City Airport in regards to their ID requirements. See:

* <http://www.azstarnet.com/allheadlines/235184>

* <http://papersplease.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/tsa-080226-070-mocek.pdf>

At this point, it remains unclear what Mocek was arrested for. Unofficial police statements say is being booked for "disturbing the peace" by taking photographs at a TSA checkpoint. As of 5 p.m. Sunday, Mocek has been in police custody for four hours, and is still being "processed" by airport police.

The Cannabis Defense Coalition is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit member cooperative focused on marijuana activism in Washington State. More information is available at www.cdc.coop.

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