

## Joseph M. Spreng, Testimony in Support of HB 6715, February 26, 2007

Senator McDonald, all other committee members, ladies & gentlemen;

Good afternoon, my name is Joseph Michael Spreng. I live at 40 River Road, Clinton, CT. I stand before you today to advocate your passage of HB 6715 as amended. I am a Connecticut resident and have been for 38 years. I worked as a Locomotive Engineer for 37 years and retired last year. I volunteered in 1969 and served three years active duty in the USMC and was Honorably Discharged in 1976 with honors. I'm married and have been for almost 34 years now and we've raised our four children here and have lived in the same house in Clinton for over 31 years.

I have Type II Diabetes, Celliac Disease, Neuropathy & severe Tinnitus in my left ear. The Celliac Disease causes nausea, cramps and discomfort, along with other negative digestive disorders. The Diabetic Neuropathy that I have is the type that I'm in constant pain from. I have "pins & needles" all over both of my feet; all the time, along with the "hots & colds" which at times is like having your feet in a bucket of ice water or having them on fire. When I walk it's like walking on hot marbles in your bare feet. In addition I have random sharp pains which are like something just cut off 1/2 of my foot or just the toe/s and at other times it's like a spike in the arch or other areas. The only time I'm not in pain from this is when I can asleep; at one point not long ago I went almost a year and a half without a decent nights sleep because of this.

As treatment for the Neuropathy I've been prescribed numerous medications from various Physicians such as: Neurontin, Cymbalta, Lyrica, Zonisamide & Clonazepam. All of which had severe physical and psychological side effects which I found unacceptable. In addition I've been prescribed Ambien and Tramadol, which were little help, and then Methadone; which almost killed me from an adverse reaction to this prescription, after being hospitalized for this I was prescribed Oxycodone. I remained on Oxycodone until voluntarily stopping it three weeks ago; I'd come to the conclusion that I didn't like the opiate dependency and did not want to remain in the never ending downward spiral of this addiction; even if it was covered by my insurance. I am currently trying unconventional infrared treatments, that are not covered by insurance. At no time over the years has any Physician ever mentioned marijuana or that it might be a treatment or even an option from which I might benefit. I've found that physicians are reticent to even discuss it; in fact a physician recently recommended that I continue using opiates and not even consider unconventional treatments as an alternative. I am now much more proactive about my healthcare and what medications that I do and do not take.

With myself and many other Connecticut residents suffering from Neuropathy and for those many more who will suffer from this insidious disease due to Type II Diabetes I would ask that you not only pass HB 6715 but that you also amend Section 1 part (1) "Debilitating medical condition" to include "Neuropathy". This will allow all these many Connecticut residents & myself to have another option to chose from. I'm not certain why Neuropathy was omitted from the current proposal, it's another disease of the central nervous system like Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis and epilepsy. I believe all the other States which have passed similar Legislation include Neuropathy specifically in their definitions or it's included by a more broad definition and scope. I respectfully ask that you correct this unfortunate oversight and include "Neuropathy" in the definition in Section 1 part (1) of HB 6715.

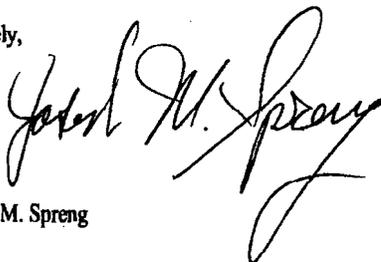
As I see it I currently have three choices:

1. I can become a legal opiate addict, again.
2. I can become a criminal.
3. I can leave Connecticut and reside in one of the States which does include Neuropathy.

None of which I find acceptable. You ladies and gentlemen of the of this Committee and Connecticut Legislature have the ability to change that and provide myself and so many other Connecticut residents with another option and another choice I respectfully request that you do so.

Thank you for your time, consideration and assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Spreng