

**Judiciary Committee**  
**SB 349 An Act Concerning Penalty for Possession of**  
**Small Amount of Marijuana (1 ounce or less) (In Favor)**

My name is Michael Collins, and I am from Orange. I am here to give my total endorsement to SB 349, Marijuana Decriminalization.

I suffer from diabetic neuropathy and from glaucoma, and for 21 months lived in an international jurisdiction where I was able to obtain a physician's authorization to use it for treatment of my symptoms.

While SB 349 is not specifically a medical law, it would lower penalties to an infraction on an ounce or less of Marijuana, shielding many medical Marijuana patients from arrest, by default.

Students would no longer face the stigma and mental trauma of an arrest, an arrest record, the loss of employment, student loans, and worse!

The war on drugs has always been racist, going back to the early propaganda films against Marijuana which depicted racial minorities as rapists, after simply taking a few puffs. Let's put an end to racism in Connecticut!

I am a founding officer of the new chapter of NORML (National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) here in Connecticut. In a few short weeks we have seen thousands of people join the NORML CT Facebook page, and visit our web site [normlct.org](http://normlct.org) -- many of whom are here today. Our ads have reached many millions more on their computer screens.

For several decades I have also been a gay activist, and can proudly say Connecticut is now one of two states to have gay marriage. Connecticut was also the second state in the union to decriminalize homosexuality, way back in 1969.

Connecticut has always been a progressive leader. But the gays did have to "come out" to get rights here.

Similarly, those who wish the decriminalization of marijuana must "come out"- they must tell their family and relatives about their stand on this issue, they must tell their friends and 2 coworkers. It often is difficult, but if progress is to be made, they must do so. The only way to fight the right is with honesty, as has been proven through history.

The Marijuana laws will fall in Connecticut. The jails will be thrown open.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in favor of SB 349, Marijuana Decriminalization!

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