

In SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING RAISED BILLS:

**SB 952 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ENHANCED PENALTY FOR THE SALE OR POSSESSION OF DRUGS NEAR SCHOOLS, DAY CARE CENTERS AND PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECTS and
SB 953 AN ACT CONCERNING NONVIOLENT DRUG POSSESSION OFFENSES**

In SUPPORT OF SB 1014 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PENALTY FOR CERTAIN NONVIOLENT DRUG OFFENSES

Dear Judiciary Committee,

My name is Scott Gabriel; I'm a 25 year old white male from Manchester Connecticut. I currently have two jobs and I attended Manchester Community College part time. I am for decriminalizing marijuana in Connecticut because of my personal experiences and also because of what I see the law do to other young adults like me.

In October of 2009, my friend and I were experimenting with marijuana in Manchester Connecticut when we got arrested. We were arrested by four guys in sweat shirts and in an unmarked green Taurus. But before our arrest we got in a chase with them because we thought they were going to rob us and do harm too us. All they did to signal that they may be cops was to give us a hand signal to pull over but because we were scared we did not want to stop until we heard or saw a cop car. While being chased I through out the bag of marijuana and told my friend "if he hears cop sirens then pull over". A few minutes later we heard cop sirens and pulled over, to only be thrown out of a car on to somebody's front lawn. Then I was charged with three felonies and two misdemeanors. The charges were 1500 feet of a school zone, tapering with evidence, carrying less then four ounces of marijuana and two other charges I can't remember at this time.

This has had a great impact in my life financially and emotionally. I feel as though its wrong for kids like me, that experiment with a drug that has been proven over time not to have killed anyone or be addicting in anyway to be arrested and branded as a felon. I have been a good kid all my life never getting in trouble in school or out of school for anything. I have also been athlete in and out of school and an average student trying to do whatever I can to make something out of myself. This angered me and upset me when I got arrested for something that is less dangerous then alcohol. With the felonies I was even more scared, not knowing what they meant or what they could do to my future. Thank god I have a good family and good people in my life to help me out and get me a good lawyer. But, if I didn't have these people in my life my goals and opportunities could have been ruined because I was branded as a felon. I feel that this happens to a lot of kids my own age and I feel as though many kids my own age get there lives ruined over such little things as in experimenting with marijuana. This is why I feel so strongly on decriminalizing marijuana and revising the Drug Free School Zone Law in Connecticut.

Thank you,
Scott Gabriel
Manchester, CT