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**To: Judicial Committee Members**

**From: Sandra J. Staub, ACLU-CT Legal Director**

**Written Testimony Supporting Governor's Bill No. 3427  
An Act Concerning the Palliative Use of Marijuana**

Good afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Sandra Staub and as the Legal Director for the ACLU of Connecticut, I am writing to express the ACLU-CT's support for Governor's Bill No. 3427, An Act Concerning the Palliative Use of Marijuana.

We support the Governor's Bill regarding palliative use because it will allow physicians to prescribe marijuana for their patients without the fear of arrest hanging over the heads of either the patient, the patient's caregivers or the physician. There is no basis for the state to interfere with the ability of a patient to access this treatment if, in the treating physician's expert opinion, it is appropriate.

According to medical experts, medical marijuana can be used to relieve pain, increase appetite, decrease nausea, and relax muscles. It can also relieve the symptoms of other diseases. For cancer, medical cannabis provides a potential alternative treatment to the chronic pain, loss of appetite, nausea, depression and anxiety. Marijuana also may act directly on tumors to kill cancerous cells, and can be a helpful treatment for an aggressive form of brain cancer known as glioblastoma.<sup>i</sup> Medical marijuana relieves nerve pain, aching, burning, and painful numbness associated with HIV.<sup>ii</sup> The chemicals found in marijuana can be used to regulate body movement and coordination in the treatment of Parkinson's Disease, and other brain disorders.<sup>iii</sup>

Fifteen states and the District of Columbia have already enacted laws that allow for the use of medical marijuana for qualifying patients. Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and the District of Columbia have all passed bills that legalize the use of medical marijuana. People

living in our state should be at liberty to access this treatment when it is authorized by a physician.

The ACLU of Connecticut welcomes the opportunity to express our continued support for this bill and respectfully requests that this Committee work for its passage this session.

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<sup>i</sup> "What Are the Medical Uses for Marijuana," 16 Mar 2010. <http://www.livestrong.com/article/94252-medical-uses-marijuana/>.

<sup>ii</sup> "Marijuana Relieves HIV Nerve Pain," 19 Feb 2007. <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/63333.php>.

<sup>iii</sup> "'Natural Marijuana' May Treat Brain Disorders," 25 Mar 1999. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/303438.stm>.