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**Testimony
Karen Frame
Public Hearing Medical Marijuana Use
Monday 3/14/11**

I'm on Social Security Disability for bipolar.

I've been using marijuana off and on for almost forty years. UConn Health Center in Farmington diagnosed me bipolar in 1994. I have told my doctors all along that marijuana is preferable to many of their pharmaceuticals. Only problem, it's illegal.

This fall, I began a battle with an APRN at UConn regarding marijuana and alcohol use. I have not asked for treatment for alcohol or marijuana. I am seeking bipolar medications. She is threatening to withhold Lithium and Wellbutrin if I'm not "sober".

My question, can she refuse to treat me for bipolar if I refuse to stop smoking marijuana? I have been on a ridiculous number of their latest, greatest drugs with nasty side effects.

Lithium and Wellbutrin work well for me. Alcohol and marijuana do, too. Lithium and marijuana keep me out of the hospital. Drinking and smoking marijuana doesn't hospitalize me, bipolar does.

I was married seven years to an AA big book thumper. It almost killed me. I was in and out of the hospital several times a year despite a wide variety of latest, greatest meds. I seldom smoked pot during those years.

My college kids think I'm doing the best they've seen in years. I'm divorced, no longer attend AA, drink wine moderately, smoke marijuana regularly and take bipolar meds as prescribed. I drink less when I smoke pot. They like me on marijuana and hate me drunk. It's been years since I've been this stable and happy.

The person who gets marijuana for me was arrested two weeks ago. He faces serious charges for providing small amounts of what should be medical marijuana.

We are losing the war on drugs. It should be legal and taxable, like alcohol. Just another business that will improve the government's bottom line. You can't legislate morality. You have to teach it. Marijuana use is a moral decision. A black and white attitude towards marijuana and alcohol doesn't work; there are too many shades of grey in the real world.

My biggest problem isn't alcohol and marijuana. It's unemployment. My disability is \$12,000 an year, I can't live without money from my elderly mom and food stamps. I've been job hunting for months. I've tried to work with the Bureau of Rehab Services since last July. Nothing but misinformation. Ask me how the Back To Work programs don't work.

I need to focus on finding a job, not worrying about medications. It will be difficult to job hunt if I'm off bipolar meds. If I can't find marijuana, I'll be in the hospital. I should hope withholding Lithium and Wellbutrin because I smoke marijuana is illegal as well as unethical.

Karen Frame
karen.frame@gmail.com
860-321-7729
860-284-8199