

Originally I had intended to stand here as a man of science. I wanted to point out all the scientific research that has been done on cannabis. Then I intended to stand here as a man of finance and point out that cities like Oakland California generated 1.5 million tax dollars last year to throw into their general pool. Not to mention the job creation this new industry would produce...

I come here today not as a man of science, finance, or business. I come here today only as a humble man who is both a loving husband and a father who will do anything for his family.

This bill has a personal impact on my family, which is one of the reasons that I support it so passionately. Recently, my wife and mother of our 3 children displayed signs of leukemia. The prescription for now is "wait and watch" as it is too early to begin treatment. To know this disease is waiting in the shadows, and know at the same time that not every treatment is available in CT right now, is horrifying. Medical Cannabis could aide in preventing a variety of cancer types and could ease the side effects from commonly used chemotherapy medications. I urge you to vote yes on this bill so that when the time comes, my wife and others like her will have the option of using medical cannabis as a doctor approved part of her treatment plan.

My daughter was born with an epileptic condition that caused her to have up to 80 noticeable seizures per day, and those were just the ones we were catching. Over time this has become more manageable through the aides of surgery and medicine, but the side effects from the medications at times can become difficult. Mood swings, aggression, and cognitive impairment are some of the side effects she faces from her medications every day. In the long term, these medications will have a serious impact on her liver, possibly shortening her life span. Cannabis reduces seizure activity in epileptics by over 60% in cases reported by Institutions such as Berkley, HarborSide Health Center, and the Epilepsy Foundation. Please vote yes on this bill so that one day these treatments may be made available to my daughter and others like her throughout this state.

The medicinal benefits of cannabis are widely known. As states continue to pass medical cannabis regulations we not only show our compassion for those who are chronically ill, we as a society get closer to the research goals that will someday save the lives of the people we love. Wouldn't you want to know that every available treatment was there for you or a loved one to ensure wellness? I ask as a husband and a father that you share a concern for the suffering of chronically ill residents of our state so that tomorrow we can ensure their quality of life through appropriate and safe use of medicinal cannabis. Thank you for your time. Please vote yes on Bill 5389.

John Watkins
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