



Testimony on HB 5389 Concerning the Palliative Use of Marijuana  
Submitted on March 7, 2012

To the Joint Committee on Judiciary

By Calvina Fay, Executive Director, Save Our Society From Drugs

Chairman Eric Coleman, Chairman Gerald Fox, Ranking Member John Kissel, Ranking Member John Hetherington and other distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee:

We respectfully request that this testimony, on behalf of Save Our Society From Drugs, a national drug policy organization with members in the state of Connecticut, be included in the hearing that is scheduled for March 7, 2012 pertaining to HB 5389.

Save Our Society From Drugs, (S.O.S.) has over ten years of experience in monitoring and making recommendations on drug policy issues, including those pertaining to marijuana as a so-called medicine. We have helped many cities and states to close the loopholes that often exist with these programs. S.O.S. takes a comprehensive approach to promote sound drug policy that includes education, prevention, abstinence-based treatment, scientific research, and community awareness. Our members include doctors, researchers, law enforcement officials, business leaders, lawyers, and parents, just to name a few.

We have analyzed this bill and believe that this legislation will have significant negative impact on the state of Connecticut. Please take this opportunity to review our analysis of HB 5389.

Marijuana is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) so its use is unregulated. This has significant implications for patient care, as there are many health risks associated with marijuana use.

Past evaluations by several Department of Health and Human Services agencies, including the FDA, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and National Institute for Drug Abuse, found that no sound scientific studies supported medical use of crude marijuana for treatment. Further, no animal or human data supported the safety or efficacy of it for general medical use.

The FDA's guidelines for a drug's approval require that certain factors be established, such as, the quantity of dose, the frequency and duration of administration, and the impact of interaction with other medicines. Never has smoking been accepted as a method of administering any medicine. Simply put, crude marijuana does not meet the standards of modern medicine

Proponents of "medical" marijuana want you to believe that only those with debilitating medical conditions who have unsuccessfully sought out other approved treatment will qualify for "medical" marijuana. **This is not true!** One only needs to look at the numbers from other states that have passed such legislation to see how widely the programs are being abused.

Available data from states that have passed similar laws show that less than 10% of medi-pot users are cancer, HIV/AIDS, or glaucoma patients. Well over 90% cite "chronic pain," an indefinable term that is being used to cover medical conditions such as headaches and minor arthritis.

The 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health shows a significant rise in youth marijuana use. Many drug policy experts, including those at the Office of National Drug Control Policy, believe this rise is a direct result of marijuana legalization efforts. Research indicates that when perception of risk declines, usage rates increase. States that have legalized marijuana under the guise of medicine continually rank toward the top of the chart for youth marijuana use rates.

HB 5389 would increase drugged driving incidents. It will be impossible to determine through drug testing if an individual smoked marijuana before getting behind the wheel or the night before. According to a study conducted by the University of Auckland, regular cannabis users were 9.5 times more likely to be involved in automobile accidents. *Marijuana Use and Motor Vehicle Crashes*, recently published in the peer-reviewed 2012 edition of *Epidemiological Reviews*, looked at nine studies conducted over the past two decades on marijuana and car crash risk. They concluded, "drivers who test positive for marijuana or self-report using marijuana are more than twice as likely as other drivers to be involved in motor vehicle crashes."

States that have legalized marijuana under the guise of medicine are now working to restrict and in some cases repeal their programs. In fact, Delaware, the most recent state to pass a "medical" marijuana law, has halted implementation of the law due to valid concerns over federal prosecution. Marijuana remains illegal under federal law and a recently released memorandum by the Deputy Attorney General specifically noted that the prosecution of significant traffickers of illegal drugs, including marijuana, remains a core priority of Dept of Justice. This would include commercial operations that cultivate, sell and distribute marijuana.

I hope that you will consider these findings and that you will REJECT HB 5389. We would be happy to provide you with additional information or discuss this issue further with you, if you so desire.

With Respect,



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