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TESTIMONY OF GLORIA BLICK

March 7, 2012

To: Members of Connecticut's General Assembly's Judiciary Committee

Re: Legislation to Legalize Medical Marijuana

To The Honorable Members of the General Assembly's Judiciary Committee:

My name is Gloria Blick. I am the Billing Specialist for my son, Dr. Gary Blick's, non-profit medical and research clinic, CIRCLE CARE Center in Norwalk CT. I am also the former and most recent Chairwoman of Stamford's Senior Centers Board of Directors, former Mayor Dannel Malloy's appointed Commissioner for the Commission on the Aged, active member of the Advisory Board of the Southwest CT Agency on Aging, and active member of the Board of Director's of Stamford's Smith House Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. I also just celebrated my 90th birthday last Thursday and wish to speak to you today in support of CT's Legislation to Legalize Marijuana based on my personal experience smoking marijuana for my glaucoma.

I have been fighting glaucoma of my eyes for the past 7 years. As you know, glaucoma is a condition where the pressures in the eyes can build up so high that blindness can occur. In 2011, my two glaucoma eye drops began failing me, as the pressures in both of my eyes rose to such high levels that my eye doctor, Dr. Jim Thimons, said I required surgery to correct the pressures. I immediately became very frightened of undergoing surgery because of my age and I had nightmares of dying on an operating table long before my time. I told my son on my 88th birthday that I plan to live another 25 years, and I feared surgery could bring an abrupt and unanticipated end to my life.

My son said there was some evidence that smoking marijuana could help people suffering from glaucoma. I feared marijuana all of my life and disapproved of any of my children or family doing drugs of any kind, no less marijuana. But my son helped put my mind at ease and simply asked me to try it. My son and his partner, Scott, bought me a marijuana pipe and taught me to take 2 puffs of marijuana every night before I go to sleep. When I went to see Dr. Thimons for my next visit about 1 month after beginning smoking marijuana, I remember how excited and in disbelief Dr. Thimons was with my new pressures, as they dropped low enough for him to say I no longer needed surgery! I never told him I was smoking marijuana, as I thought this is something one should not talk about, but my son explained to him that it must be the marijuana that helped my eyes, as nothing else had changed.

Next, I stopped smoking because I didn't like the way I was coughing when smoking from the pipe, but I didn't let my son or Dr. Thimons know. So on my next visit to Dr.



Thimons, my pressures rose high again where he said he needed to talk to my son. I knew the pressures must have been bad. Gary and Scott came over that night and said if I didn't want to lose my sight and if I wanted to avoid surgery that I would have to try to learn to smoke without coughing. They brought me two marijuana cigarettes, and I learned to smoke 2 puffs from the cigarette without coughing every night before I go to sleep. When I went for my next eye examination, and for every eye examination since, my eye pressures have dropped so low that I no longer need surgery. I now have the lowest pressures I have had since I started eye drops 7 years ago.

In summary, I believe medical marijuana has the potential to save the eyesight of millions of Americans suffering from glaucoma, just like me. I fear every day of my life that I don't lose my sight! If marijuana is going to help me, and if it is going to help someone else, I am all in favor of marijuana's legalization for medical use. I want to see until I close my eyes permanently, and if marijuana is it and the means to save my vision, I want to be on medical marijuana for all of the years that I have left.

I am asking all of you today to vote in favor of legalizing medical marijuana in Connecticut, not only to help me, but also to help all others suffering from glaucoma and at risk for permanent blindness.

Thank you.

Gloria Blick
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