



University of Connecticut
Undergraduate Student Government

Office of the Student Body
President

Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Sam Tracy and I am the President of the Student Body at the University of Connecticut, and would like to express my support of HB 5389: An Act Concerning the Palliative Use of Marijuana. However, there are some issues with the bill of particular concern to college students that should be addressed before its passage.

Lines 92 and 93 of the bill state that the use of marijuana will remain illegal "on any school grounds or any public or private school, dormitory, college or university property." I understand that there may be concerns with exposing children to secondhand smoke, and support prohibiting the usage of marijuana in schools. However, prohibiting the use of medical marijuana on "any... dormitory, college or university property" is discriminatory towards Connecticut citizens who happen to live on a college campus.



I fear that this provision may have been included due to characterizations of college students as a demographic that is more likely to use marijuana for recreation. While this may be statistically true, there are a number of college students who would qualify as patients under this medical marijuana bill. At UConn, we have many students with Crohn's disease, and others who are afflicted with epilepsy or cancer. Also, not all students are 18-22 year olds who came straight out of high school. There are undergraduates at UConn who are older than 50. There are hundreds of student veterans who may be afflicted with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder after having served in the armed forces. Many of these students, despite their health issues, choose to live on campus in order to get the full college experience. Denying these students the right to use their medicine in their own home would impose an undue hardship on them, and possibly drive them off-campus, away from the support networks of the University.

An Equal Opportunity Employer

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Yes, students should not smoke marijuana in their rooms, medicinal or not, because of smoke damage and the risk of second-hand smoke to other students. However, there are many other methods of using marijuana, such as vaporization or ingestion in food or drinks, that would not have these issues. Rather than ban it outright, the state of Connecticut should allow only non-smoking methods in dorm rooms, and allow colleges and universities to provide a location in the student health center where medical marijuana patients can use their medicine. Students can use any other prescription drug on campus, and non-smoked medical marijuana should be no different. As to the concern about recreational use, I feel that lines 225-230 of the bill, which make it a misdemeanor to misrepresent yourself as a medical marijuana patient, sufficiently protects against fraudulent claims of medical use.



While I am among the 79% of Connecticut residents who support medical marijuana, I am concerned that the current bill unfairly discriminates against college students. Please modify the bill to allow medical marijuana patients, who happen to be college students, some way to use their medicine.

Sincerely,

Sam Tracy
President of the Student Body
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