

SB 1117 - Testimony of WILLIAM HUHN, 465 Clapboard Hill Road, Guilford, CT March 18, 2013

As I prepared to testify on SB 1117 I realized that I should talk to you about anger. People usually think of anger as a bad thing, but sometimes it is appropriate. You all should be really angry at the people proposing to define "pain" as a debilitating condition under the medical marijuana legislation.

This is being pushed by people who are expecting to make a lot of money by turning the medical marijuana legislation into a joke. They are insulting you by urging you to raise revenue via a phony medical marijuana process.

It is especially appropriate for the Revenue Committee to reject this. This would have an adverse impact on Connecticut, especially our kids, and the proponents of this bill are urging you to share in the sleaze via taxes. I know Connecticut has a revenue problem, but there are limits to how low we will stoop. You should be shouting curses at the lobbyists pushing this; you should be throwing things at them for insulting you. And the left wing, anti-establishment types who are pushing "high" times for our kids aren't much better.

I am part of a broad coalition of groups in Guilford working to change the culture of teen abuse of alcohol and drugs in our town. One of my colleagues (will speak) (already spoke) of the adverse impact of last year's legislation on our kids. I'm going to address SB1117 from another perspective. The law enacted last year authorized a Department of Consumer Protection Medical Review Board to add medical conditions to the list eligible for marijuana use.

Apparently someone figured out that the Medical Review Board wasn't going to add "pain" to the list. They decided to do an end run around the Medical Review Board by sticking a sentence in a tax bill, SB 1117. If you go along with it as a way to raise revenue, virtually anyone will be able to get a prescription for marijuana. Will the next step be to have health insurance and Medicaid pay for everyone's marijuana habit? Won't that be great?

Anyone can claim they are bothered by "pain". This would convert medical marijuana from limited use by people undergoing chemo to anyone who wants it. In Colorado, people come to so-called pain clinics, pay the so-called doctor 60 bucks, and the guy writes prescriptions as fast as they can run the people through the line.

As you all well know, before a medicine is approved for use, it must have rigorous FDA review of its safety and efficacy. There has been no FDA review of the safety and efficacy of marijuana for pain. Has there been such a review by the Ct. Department of Health? No. What about the Consumer Protection Medical Review Board? Looks like they won't approve marijuana for pain. Let's do an end run around the Board and stick it in a tax bill.

It's not like there isn't a whole range of pain medication already available to people who actually are suffering pain. Much of it is over-the counter and needs no prescription. All such medication has been reviewed by the FDA for safety and efficacy. This ranges from aspirin to oxycontin. So there's no medical need for this. The AMA isn't the group pushing SB 1117.

Current research indicates there are serious health effects from marijuana use. It includes things like lower IQ, demotivation, and perhaps increased likelihood of psychosis. It is quite possible that the FDA would find that such dangers are too serious to warrant approval even if Connecticut decided to spend \$ several hundred million on a clinical trial for marijuana. At a minimum, the legislature should not decide that marijuana is safe for pain without inquiry into the existing research and careful examination of the health dangers, including the adverse message to our youth. This is a terrible revenue source.

In closing, I'd like to say again that it's okay for you to get mad at the people asking you to fill their pockets with money. I hope you kill this idea when you vote.