

Dear Representatives, Senators, Committee Members, Department of Consumer Protection, and Governor Malloy regarding Raised Bill 1064:

My name is Linda Stewart. I am technically Cyndimae's second cousin because I am Susan's cousin, but her kids have always known me as "Auntie Linda." My sister Mary, Susan and I are really each other's support system and best of friends. I live in Susan's home here in Connecticut and have been helping to raise her teenage daughters in her absence. My grandchildren and I miss Cyndimae a lot, but we are happy to see her actually living. I hate to watch my grandchildren growing up in Susan's home missing their best friend and playmate Cyndimae, and missing Auntie Sue, one of their primary caregivers.

We are a lot like a mini tribe within our tribe helping one another with children, work and everything. Connecticut law tore this woman from her husband, and from her other children. It has torn my cousin Susan from a job she loved at our Tribe, from her culture and most important, from personally witnessing her oldest daughter grow up overnight. I was witness to the trauma of Susan giving up a job she loved for a child she loved more. But I was also witness to several of Cyndimae's cardiac arrests, and I was witness to Susan, protecting her baby girl, and fleeing Connecticut to Maine to save her baby's life. In their time in Maine, Susan protected her baby girl during difficult living situations even though she owns a home here in Connecticut. A mother should not have to live in these circumstances to protect her baby from Connecticut law.

I just want Connecticut to understand from whom are you protecting these children? I am ecstatic that with Bill 1064 Connecticut is on the verge of legalizing to allow these children access to this medicine marijuana; however, two things are disturbing. I have helped Susan in her activism in Maine and even Massachusetts.

The problems with Bill 1064 are requiring a "pediatrician" specifically and requiring TWO doctors. This has been the stumbling blocks for Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey resulting in doctor offices popping up out of nowhere who do not take insurance and exist only to trade cash for a signature. Secondly, most doctors these days are not independent – they work for large hospitals and their employers will not let them sign. We have met many parents in this journey – parents who struggle with really sick kids like Cyndimae. Massachusetts legalized in 2012, and parents are still without signatures and without medicine. Children are still dying without access in the tri-state area due to flawed laws. Some kids don't have a pediatrician: a child may see a "healthcare provider" who is a pediatrician, APRN, homeopathic doctor, family practitioner, naturopathic doctor or doctor of osteopath. Some of these kids see so many specialists they have no time for a pediatrician. Let any doctor who knows a child's medical care recommend their marijuana medicine. Unlike the medications these kids use NOW, marijuana cannot kill them. Let their parents protect them NOW. Do we honestly think parents will be out in droves to sign up to get their kids high? Please do not make more hoops for these struggling families.

I have witnessed all these things. Trust me you want Susan Meehan on your side in any battle. I have witnessed, mostly from a distance, the miracle of Cyndimae. Google her name and be amazed. Thanks to her marijuana oils, Cyndimae has a life now. Please Connecticut, give her back her family.



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