

Members of the committee:

My name is Greg Ivanov. I live in Avon and have been a lifelong resident of CT. I would like to share my personal perspective on this issue with you.

Since May of 2013, I have had the misfortune of having three surgical procedures on my lower back. The last of which took place on December 17, 2014. This was a revision of a previous failed posterior fusion.

For the past two years, I have been continuously managing my pain with a myriad of prescribed controlled substances. I am a full time employee in the Engineering Dept. at Gerber Technology in Tolland. Balancing work performance and managing pain at the same time has been quite difficult.

My obvious concern has been, and continues to revolve around addiction to the medications that I have been prescribed. I am currently working with a pain management group in Farmington and am doing my best to titrate myself off of the opiates that they have been prescribing for me. At the beginning of my treatment with them, I inquired about medicinal marijuana as an option for managing pain. I was informed that chronic pain did not qualify for this type of treatment by law. In fact, their patients are subject to random drug screening. Anyone who tests positive for marijuana will be discharged from the practice immediately. This is ironic considering patients walk out of the office with prescriptions for all types of "legal" narcotics.

As we all know, long term use of opiates can have detrimental impact to our bodies.

Unfortunately, in my case, I still have some reliance on these medications. It would be very difficult to make it through the day without them. At the same time, I need to use them responsibly as not to endanger myself, or others. This especially applies to operating a motor vehicle to and from work.

Along with the obvious psychological effects that these medications induce, there are many unpleasant physical side effects as well. Among these are nausea, loss of appetite, and constipation, just to name a few. These are all that I know too well. Cannabis causes none of these.

I believe that this bill is critical for those who are faced with addiction to prescription medications. At the same time, I feel that there should be other therapeutic options aside from traditional pharmaceuticals. In my humble opinion, the wellbeing of individuals, and their ability to exercise choice in treatment is the issue at hand.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my opinion with you. I appreciate your time and consideration.