

Good day. My name is Dwayne Paul from Hamden CT. I would like to thank each member of the Committee on Public Health for your time and consideration today. I am here to support HB5450 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE PALLIATIVE USE OF MARIJUANA and speak out for the 60,000 + people in CT who suffer from Epilepsy and may benefit greatly from this ACT.

In 1999 my daughter, Shelby, was diagnosed with Epilepsy. Since then, I have served on the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities as well as the Epilepsy Foundation of CT Board of Directors. I have met far too many people who are afflicted with this dreaded disorder and have seen first-hand the terrible effects it has on their ability to live traditional lives.

1,000's of children and adults, have suffered 1,000's of seizures; each one leaving an indelible scar on their brains and impacting their ability to lead a "normal" life. Each seizure runs the risk of being fatal and impedes brain development with the potential to cause irreversible brain damage. It is estimated that 1/3 of those living with Epilepsy have refractory Epilepsy. This is the medical professions way of saying that there is no known cure or treatment to effectively treat their Epilepsy. My daughter is among the 1/3.

Traditional science such as medications, neurosurgery, and implanted devices have helped many. However, traditional science has not helped enough. As an example, Shelby has tried 33 different anti-epileptic drugs singularly and in various combinations. None have worked and many had terrible side effects including: significant weight loss/ gain, behavioral issues, severe tiredness, insomnia, and hallucinations. Shelby has even endured 13-hours of brain surgery only to fail again to have a positive impact - let alone provide a cure!

Knowing the terrible side effects of current medications and other options that are available along with the high probability of not curing the disorder or stopping seizures, we end up treating our children like science experiments under a trial & error system. All this with the knowledge and support of the medical community. Yet here we are in 2016 still without a conventional "cure" that is effective in controlling seizures for 1,000's of people like Shelby.

However, we now know of a new treatment that has proven to be effective for many people. Specifically, the use of Cannabis Oil in the treatment for those with Epilepsy. A major concern with Cannabis oil treatment is that there is not enough research into what the long term effects from its use may have on the brain.

While that is true, I respectfully ask the Committee to:

- * recall the failure of traditional science and long term effects of the medications previously mentioned.
- * take into consideration the fact that the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, who opposed a similar measure last year, now advocates for HB 5450.
- * look to the 16 states that have enacted legislation allowing low-THC content Cannabis Oil for limited use with positive results.
- * realize that this can be a treatment that stops someone from seizing and helps many in CT live a more "normal" life.

Finally, I respectfully ask this Committee to help the 1,000's of people like Shelby and recommend HB 5450 for further action. My sincere thanks to each of you for your time and consideration.

Dwayne Paul—835 Mix Ave, Hamden CT, 06514—203.858.5784 –
dwaynepaul@sbcglobal.net