

Patient Care- Prime Wellness of Connecticut

Cannabis Community Advocate

Testimony In support of Raised Senate Bill 487

Honorable Co Chairs and Esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee, I am here to today to communicate my strong support for you to exercise your legislative power to favorably pass SB487 into law.

Ending prohibition of cannabis and hemp in Connecticut will-

- **Keep children safe from drug dealers, and discourage them from trying to purchase cannabis.**
- **Allow parents to start conversations and educate themselves and their children about cannabis**
- **Encourage communities to educate its citizens about safe responsible cannabis consumption**
- **Reduce incarceration rates for nonviolent crimes, help keep families together and people productive**
- **Create revenue, and generate funds that will Stimulate our economy**
- **Create Jobs, and opportunities for continuing education**
- **Eliminate barriers to effective mental health care and success of drug abuse treatment programs**
- **Reduce the burdens placed on law enforcement, judicial resources, and prisons**
- **Promote social justice reform, and discourage race and class discrimination**
- **Permit for more research and developments to make cannabis safer and more useful**
- **Introduce safer methods of use for those who currently only have limited access to illegal cannabis**
- **Positively impact our medical program , reduce stigma and help end persecution of patients**
- **Instill a sense of personal responsibility on cannabis consumers and place trust them to protect other consumers**
- **Show your constituents you hear them, and that you have done your research on cannabis**

Please also consider my attached testimonies, thank you.

Respectfully,

Christina E. Capitan

Families in Connecticut are being torn apart by cannabis prohibition. So many families in our state have lost and still stand to lose so much to prohibition of cannabis. They are living in fear because they choose to consume cannabis as an adult recreationally instead of alcohol or other substances.

Parents who choose cannabis over other potentially more harmful yet legal recreational drugs like liquor are fearful of losing their children, because of prohibition even though they are fully capable of caring for them and consuming cannabis responsibly. Families are scrutinized and face investigations and invasive drug and mental health screenings, if they are suspected of using cannabis in their home. Cannabis consumers are unfairly targeted by the archaic laws that reinforce stigma and fear. Recreational cannabis consumers, should not be prosecuted, as we promote, encourage and celebrate alcohol consumption.

Adults who choose to use cannabis recreationally, should not be perceived in the same way, as a person that chooses to use cocaine or prescription pills recreationally.

Young adults that are arrested or fined for cannabis possession, may lose their ability to receive federal financial aid for continuing education and for federal housing assistance, it could ruin a person's life.

My mother was an alcoholic, and was on multiple pharmaceuticals to treat her mental health conditions no different than my own. I use cannabis to treat my mental health symptoms and I am a mother. I believe a child in the care of a cannabis consumer in any context is in far less danger, and subjected to less harm than the child of someone who is under the influence of the legal and popular alternative.

As a parent, although I do not condone, nor do I promote the option for my son to use cannabis currently. I prefer that in the future, he has the option as an adult to legally, without stigma or fear of arrest choose to use cannabis recreationally over alcohol.

Alcohol is considered generally acceptable, is currently being crafted in people's homes, is done socially and openly in lounges and is sold every day of the week legally in Connecticut.

Alcohol is also directly associated to an addiction disease state known as Alcoholism, is also proven to knowingly contribute to fatal overdoses, organ failures, and traffic fatalities in our state.

If you are giving a people an opportunity to alter their minds, let loose, relax, and become intoxicated by consuming poison and placing personal responsibility on those who are not of sound mind to make sound decisions or their capacity to drive or w. I do not understand what we are doing here again this year, discussing if it's okay to allow cannabis to be consumed by adults recreationally.

I will keep coming back and testifying before you, until people have safe legal access to whole cannabis plants, in any form we choose, and until cannabis consumers, medical or otherwise are treated in fair positive non-criminal manner.

Thank you for your time and attention, I trust you will do what is right for your constituents and their families.

I want to help you understand the reason patients are here in numbers to testify today, they see the benefit and relative safety of the product first hand. In addition currently in Connecticut, registered cannabis patients are facing prosecution for growing or obtaining cannabis outside of the regulations.

Their nonconformity is not because they are or want to be criminals, but due to the fact that their needs are not sufficiently being met within the context of our states current medical cannabis program.

People of our state are grateful for our model program that was and is desperately needed, and is constantly praised by those who have access to it.

The unfortunate truth is the cost of patient registration and the cost of products creates financial burdens to patients and their families, and may prohibit a patient access to effective medicine because they are destitute. A patient who cannot afford a registration is considered a criminal, despite meeting all other qualification requirements and that is unacceptable.

The products types that are offered to patients within the program are insufficient to meet the needs of all of the patients in our state. Raw cannabis plant for instance, is not offered, but may contain crucial ingredients to treat certain conditions or symptoms that are approved already by the Department of Consumer Protection's, Board of Physicians as qualifying.

The lack of consistent availability within our medical cannabis program creates barriers to appropriate and effectual treatment for patients with certain debilitating ailments.

Patients that I work with believe that with a passage of a bill legalizing cannabis for adult use, will have a positive impact on the way that patients are treated.

Some of the patients I spoke to believe that allowing those adults, currently participating in our medical program who feel they use cannabis outside of the medical context, but do so within the program to protect themselves from arrest, may choose to vacate the medical program and obtain their cannabis legally through the more appropriate market absent fear of facing prosecution. Knowing this will free up crucial medicine in short supply and high demand.

Patients hope that the medical cannabis program will be benefited by a lucrative operational recreational market financially and this help the evolution and growth of the medical program. Patients are in desperate need of Compassion Programs on the state level and are going without the medicine, they need, are being persecuted and discriminated against, and they need help, please help them if it is within your capacity in any way. Thank you for your time, it is appreciated as always.

Christina E. Capitan, Cannabis Patient Advocate, Community Allied Services