

Written Testimony on Opposition of SB 1138
Finance Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
April 28, 2019

My name is Susan Klein and I lost my husband of almost 25 years on the night of October 25, 2015. I lost him because an 18-year old woman was high on marijuana and got behind the wheel of a car. Coming from the opposite direction on I-84 she crossed the median into our car as we headed home from a concert that Sunday night. In one second of time, my world and that of my then 20-year old boys, Maxwell and Aaron, went dark.

I find it inherently difficult to believe that we have to fight to not legalize recreational marijuana. That something so obviously wrong is even being considered. The question is "Why?" What about the societal implications of this action? What about the consequences of a persons actions when they get behind the wheel high? It took over three years for my family to get justice because there is nothing in place, like there is for alcohol, to detect how present marijuana is in a persons system. If it contributed to the situation. In the case of our accident, the driver ultimately admitted her wrong doing. I don't think I would have survived her walking away, as she did at the scene of the accident, free and clear of any wrong doing.

And what about the lost time, motivation, the attendant unawareness of the user? My husband, Kevin, was so very respected at his work, Pitney Bowes, and was responsible for bringing in millions to the company. After his death, Pitney Bowes created an award in his name for their international company in honor of and to pay tribute to Kevin. It is given to the team that best exemplified the innovative culture. Kevin epitomized innovative leadership and collaboration at Pitney Bowes. And that was lost to Pitney Bowes the night of October 25, 2015.

If this legislation passes, anyone in this room could lose a loved one - on the road, to the health risk of cancer from smoking, to addiction. Or to further exploration into more powerful drugs. I think especially of the young people that think they're immortal and have the 'it won't happen to me' mentality. You may be going to a concert, a baseball game or the grocery store and never go home again.

I am very fearful of what this legislation Will do to our beautiful state if it is passed. A state in which I have lived my entire life and which I assumed would keep its citizens safe in any possible way. I am fearful for my boys, my family, my friends and neighbors. I am fearful for anyone that may have to go through what I have. Not only the loss of someone who means the world to them, but to endure what could be years before any justice.

Why? Why make this drug so easily assessable? Why put us all at risk? Why make a blood bath of the roads and highways of Connecticut? Destroy a family where a user may not be able to control themselves. A person smoking pot cannot be responsible for their actions, cannot think coherently. It is Not okay to give people the legal permission to get high. There is no amount of money worth the devastation this would cause. And some day if God forbid this bill passes, you will be affected personally and you will think about what I have said today. But it will be too late.