Testimony for SB16 An Act Concerning the Adult Use of Cannabis
Submitted by Jason Blakesley, Coventry, CT

Good evening. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Jason Blakesley. I reside in Coventry, CT. I’m here to speak in favor of SB16, An Act Concerning the Adult Use of Cannabis, in spite of the many things that are problematic. The law as written will not prevent the police from searching and having probable cause based on smell.

I’ve been a cannabis patient for five years. I’m also a convicted felon for growing without a license. I’m banned from being employed in the medical cannabis industry. Despite the negative impact that this has come on my life, I will not qualify for the equity license. I agree that some communities were disproportionately affected by the racist war on cannabis. Even though I have the experience of growing, and the current producers so evidently need, I am unable to work in this industry. So I am unable to match my skill with a need in the market due to the current laws.

I want to speak on Section 36, Paragraph 1, Grow Rights for Patients. I do support grow rights for patients to have the right to grow their own cannabis for medicinal purposes. I want to make this perfectly clear. The medical cannabis program in CT is not the gold standard. The four producers are not producing a quality product. With lack of competition, there is no reason for them to step up their standards. Limiting the quantity of how much a patient can grow, you could leave them vulnerable from not being able to produce enough of the medicine they need. Although I think patients should have the right to grow in an unlimited amount of space, I suggest starting at a minimum of 36 square feet grow area for flowering would be better than what is proposed. I am recommending 36 square feet because the majority of indoor grow lights cover that exact area.

This would allow the patient to grow the types of strains that treat their symptoms the best. There are far too many variables to put all your hopes and dreams on the harvest of maybe two plants. If well connected people from out of

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state can grow cannabis in a 40-60,000 square feet facility, then life-long residents like me should be able to grow at least 36 square feet in their home.

I respectfully ask that you move the date up for the law that will allow patients to grow, which as it is written now in section 36, paragraph 1, won’t take effect till 2022. Patients should be able to grow immediately upon passage of this bill.

Also, I believe felons, those who have been convicted for growing without a license, should be able to grow in the industry.

Expand the equity program to include others that have been affected but don’t live within the identified communities. These individuals have suffered the same punishments.

I also request that you remove and destroy the DNA samples they collected from convicted felons convicted of cannabis related crimes.

The near 200 dollar doctor fee is very costly for most. Perhaps those recertifying can bypass that process. The doctor recommendation should be a one time only thing, not something you have to do every year.

Thank you for listening. I would love to answer any questions that you have on my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

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