Dear Chairperson and committee members,

Presented to the CT Judiciary Committee regarding Bill SB-16

After losing my step daughter Taylor, at 20 years old, to a drug overdose, my wife and I have dedicated the last 8 years to supporting our community, consoling families, educating our youth, pleading with agencies and legislators, building a local coalition of concerned citizens to make our town safer for our kids.

We’ve managed to help “turn off the faucet” of opioid painkillers, with an emphasis on ‘killers’. We’ve rallied our parents and school system to help cut back on teen alcohol consumption. We’ve worked tirelessly to educate our community about the real threat of suicide ideation among our youth. We’ve helped over 170 families navigate the challenge of living with an active addict through a group that meets weekly, our Hope and Support Group. We’ve worked with our local government to pass one of the first local ordinances increasing the tobacco age from 18 to 21 years of age.

All this work and I appear in front of you feeling confused and betrayed by the contemplation that we are seriously considering the legalization of commercialized marijuana. This when there is mounting evidence that it will become yet another attack on our youth and families. The science is clear- don’t do it. The experiences where states have succumbed to big pot money is devastating- don’t do it. There is not one medical organization endorsing this course- Don’t do it. The law enforcement officials are clear- Don’t do it. Psychiatrists are clear- Don’t do it. Prevention professionals are clear- Don’t do it. Youth Service Bureaus are clear- Don’t do it. For all of those already dealing with a tragedy and the loss of a loved one- Don’t do it.

Marijuana has the potential to be the greatest threat to our youth we’ve ever known. What follows is a short, yet compelling list of evidence linking marijuana consumption to a variety of serious, life threatening conditions. We do not have all the research yet, but what we do have is building an undeniable case against legalization. Please read this information.

If you are still believing that legal commercialization of marijuana is good, Taylor will be shedding a tear for your soul.

- February 13, 2019- JAMA Psychiatry-

“marijuana exposure in adolescents does potentially present a risk for mood and suicidal behaviors in young adults. From a policy standpoint, those are the ones we have to make an effort to protect”

- Serena Gordon, WebMD-

“Not only were those who smoked marijuana more likely to suffer depression and suicidal thoughts, they were also more than three times as likely to attempt suicide between the ages of 18 and 32.”

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By Nancy Schmelpfening, Medically reviewed by Steven Gans, MD, Verywellmind

Updated on February 24, 2020

Although there is some evidence that marijuana may have antidepressant properties, many argue there are also some important drawbacks to its usage. There is a well-known phenomenon called "amotivational syndrome," in which chronic cannabis users become apathetic, socially withdrawn, and perform at a level of everyday functioning well below their capacity prior to their marijuana use.2 There are also other studies that indicate that marijuana is associated with an increased risk for depression.

Is marijuana linked to psychosis, schizophrenia? It's contentious, but doctors, feds say yes

Jayne O'Donnell, Trevor Hughes, Stephanie Innes USA TODAY NETWORK

"At the end of the day, you can’t make a causal statement," said Ziva Cooper, research director of the UCLA Cannabis Research Initiative and a member of the National Academies panel. "You need to have some biological premise to show that this kind of exposure causes psychotic disorder."

"It is time for Americans to understand there are substantial risks with marijuana," says Elinore McCance-Katz of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ken Welch, President

Coalition for a Better Wallingford, Inc.