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I stumbled into the world of medical cannabis research. I came across a video of an accomplished scientist, trapped in a body frozen by Parkinson's. I always remember his eyes. So full of intelligence and vibrancy, and seemingly desperation. He could not walk, talk, swallow or communicate. I cannot imagine such a fate. Then the video showed him, walking, talking, eating a sandwich and at the end, driving his car. I was mesmerized. What caused this amazing symptom alleviation? Medical cannabis.

I was incredulous, at best. So, I did what I do best, research. I opened an overwhelming trove of clinical research from around the globe, including 50 years of research from our ally Israel, and it changed my life. I reached out to my fellow Kansans and began the journey to what is now Bleeding Kansas. So, named by this history geek as a way to honor a proud heritage of compassion and courage that led Kansas to act upon a moral duty. This is how I see the struggle for medical cannabis, our moral duty to our neighbors.

Cannabis should only ever be a patient focused, public health issue. Although, financially beneficial at a time when Kansas is truly desperate for new sources of revenue, I do hope compassion can be our motivation. If you need to hear from patients, we have hundreds of parents, families and patients in our group who would be willing to speak to you about their illness and what a difference this bill could make in their life. This medicine can save thousands of Kansas lives and earn Kansas millions of tax dollars. It is time for Kansas common sense to prevail over fear, misinformation and stigma.

We are asking that as you consider and review this bill that you do not throw baby out with bathwater. If there are questions or concerns that we may instead see those as opportunities to start a collaborative dialogue as we work toward building a great law for patients and for Kansas. Kansas patients have waited too long already. We have lost children and adults during this wait. We, frankly, are tired of grieving what we see as needless deaths, filled with needless suffering. Whatever needs to be addressed, let us address it and move toward relief for patients. This bill does not answer all the needs of Kansas patients by far. We see it as a beginning point. Once it is established that the Kansas sky will not fall if patients receive medicine, and once Kansans begin to heal and patients and their physicians share their stories, leaders will see that cannabis is as equally non-toxic to a conservative career, as the plant is to the human body.

I have much more to share with you, in regards to policies, models and strategies I feel must be addressed in a Kansas law. For now, I will let the patients stories speak to you. I will let the medical research speak to you. And I will hope to speak with you soon about all the ways, fiscal included, that I believe this bill will benefit Kansas patients and Kansas. Thank you for your time today. We appreciate your listening to the voice of patients. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.