

Good Afternoon Honorable Kansas Senators and Representatives,

My name is Brian Evans. I have Primary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis, Epilepsy, and PTSD.

It seems as if my government has failed to listen to act upon the constituents' views of this state's criminalization of a plant that only helps not hinders daily strife from pain, suffering, and debilitation.

In my case, I have no other medical options left. Nothing the Specialists can give me works.

I live in chronic pain with muscle spasms that bind me up as if my body is put in a vice. I cannot control the seizing of muscles. I am usually bound to a wheelchair while trying to raise six children alongside my very supportive spouse. I am a great father and grandfather. I am a very proud man.

When I take pharmaceutical Marinol, my Foot-Drop Syndrome disappears for a while but it comes back shortly. If I ingest Cannabis, I get all components of the plant that I need. I can get out of my wheelchair, walk, and play with my children and grandchildren. I can think clearer than when I am using Cannabis for my symptoms. My speech is better and my muscles release and are calm for up to 7 hours. That is much longer than the hour of "a little relief" from the Marinol. I am a much better father. Using Cannabis in its pure form could extend my life. I need the Cannabinoids. They help with my MS. They make my body able to function without seizures. They have many properties that help me especially the antispasmodic properties. Because I have a neurologic disease, I need the cannabinoids to slow my disease progression. I need the whole plant.

"Despite FDA approval², Marinol typically provides only limited relief to select patients, particularly when compared to natural cannabis and its cannabinoids. Marinol should remain a legal option for patients and physicians; however, federal and state laws should be amended to allow for those patients who are unresponsive to synthetic THC the ability to use natural cannabis and its cannabinoids as a medical therapy without fear of arrest and/or criminal prosecution. By prohibiting the possession and use of natural cannabis and its cannabinoids, patients are unnecessarily restricted to use a synthetic substitute that lacks much of the therapeutic efficacy of natural cannabis.

Marinol Lacks Several of the Therapeutic Compounds Available in Natural Cannabis

Chemical compounds in cannabis, known as cannabinoids, are responsible for its numerous therapeutic benefits. Scientists have identified 66 naturally occurring cannabinoids.³

The active ingredient in Marinol, synthetic delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), is an analogue of one such compound, THC. However, several other cannabinoids available in cannabis -- in addition to naturally occurring terpenoids (oils) and flavonoids (phenols) -- have also been clinically demonstrated to possess therapeutic utility. Many patients favor natural cannabis to Marinol because it includes these other therapeutically active cannabinoids.

For example, cannabidiol (CBD) is a non-psychoactive cannabinoid that has been clinically demonstrated to have analgesic, antispasmodic, anxiolytic, antipsychotic, antinausea, and anti-rheumatoid arthritic properties.⁴

Animal and human studies have shown CBD to possess anti-convulsant properties, particularly in the treatment of epilepsy.⁵ Natural extracts of CBD, when administered in combination with THC, significantly reduce pain, spasticity and other symptoms in multiple sclerosis (MS) patients unresponsive to standard treatment medications.⁶

Clinical studies also demonstrate CBD to be neuroprotective against glutamate neurotoxicity⁷ (i.e. stroke), cerebral infarction⁸ (localized cell death in the brain), and ethanol-induced neurotoxicity,⁹ with CBD being more protective against glutamate neurotoxicity than either ascorbate (vitamin C) or alpha-tocopherol (vitamin E).¹⁰ Clinical trials have also shown CBD to possess anti-tumoral properties,¹¹ inhibiting the growth of glioma (brain tumor) cells in a dose dependent manner and selectively inducing apoptosis (programmed cell death) in malignant cells.¹²

Additional cannabinoids possessing clinically demonstrated therapeutic properties include: cannabitol (anticonvulsant¹³ and anti-inflammatory¹⁴ activity); cannabichromene (anti-inflammatory¹⁵ and antidepressant¹⁶ activity); and cannabigerol (anti-tumoral¹⁷ and analgesic¹⁸ activity). Natural cannabis' essential oil components (terpenoids) exhibit anti-inflammatory properties¹⁹ and its flavonoids possess antioxidant activity.²⁰ Emerging clinical evidence indicates that cannabinoids may slow disease progression²¹ in certain autoimmune and neurologic diseases, including multiple sclerosis²² (MS), Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis²³ (Lou Gehrig's disease) and Huntington's Disease.²⁴

Clinical data indicate that the synergism of these compounds is likely more efficacious²⁵ than the administration of synthetic THC alone.²⁶ For example, McPartland and Russo write: "Good evidence shows that secondary compounds in cannabis may enhance beneficial effects of THC. Other cannabinoid and non-cannabinoid compounds in herbal cannabis ... may reduce THC-induced anxiety, cholinergic deficits, and immunosuppression. Cannabis terpenoids and flavonoids may also increase cerebral blood flow, enhance cortical activity, kill respiratory pathogens, and provide anti-inflammatory activity."²⁷ In an *in vitro* model of epilepsy, natural cannabis extracts performed better than THC alone.²⁸ In human trials, patients suffering from multiple sclerosis experienced greater symptomatic relief from sublingual natural cannabis extracts than from the administration of oral THC.²⁹ In 2005, Health Canada approved the oral spray Sativex³⁰ -- which contains precise ratios of the natural cannabinoid extracts THC and CBD, among other compounds -- for prescription use for MS-related symptoms.³¹

(<http://norml.org/component/zoo/category/marinol-vs-natural-cannabis>)

If it is okay with the government, FDA and medical professionals to believe that a synthetic version of an illegal plant is okay (Marinol), why is it that the plant itself is not legal?

Those of us who have debilitating diseases, like my conditions, want to be seen and viewed as people, not just patients.

It seems as if our government has been helping and leaning on the pharmaceutical companies, whose pharmaceuticals have in most instances, caused more harm than good.

Why is it that the one non-addictive medication that helps that is unavailable and inaccessible to me?

I am sorry for the frustration and anger that the majority seems to think I am portraying.

I do not mean for people to see me as an anger-filled mad man. I am just a frustrated voter who wants my, our government to be serious about the passing of SB9 and HB2011 for medical patients. This plant needs no modifications from pharmaceutical companies to reap the benefits of Cannabis. It alleviates chronic pain suffering, seizures, and the effects of PTSD.

This great State of Kansas needs medical Cannabis. There is no reason why more death and suffering should occur over a plant that was put on this earth for a very good reason. To stop the suffering of people like me.

I ask. No. I beg of you to help us, please.

Sincerely,

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