

Proponent Testimony before the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
In support of
SB 113 - Providing for the legal use of medical cannabis
by Becky Plate, Private Citizen of Kansas
March 14th, 2019

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee:

I am a parent in Kansas, with a child who has struggled with mental illness for most of her life. She suffers from severe depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) related to physical abuse inflicted upon her by her biological father at a young age. She has tried many different prescription medications and supplements, including cannabidiol (CBD), and participated in countless hours of counseling and cognitive behavioral therapy. Despite the modest results of these treatment modalities, she often still finds herself feeling suicidal and hopeless to the point of inflicting self-harm. Her mental health has impacted her physically, academically and socially. Recently, a mental health provider stated to us that they wished they could recommend a trial of medical cannabis for her, but that they could not due to it being illegal in Kansas, even under medical supervision.

My child's mental illness is not my child. She is an athlete, an artist and an all-state musician. Her many talents and her career ambitions have made her a target for recruitment by multiple colleges throughout the Midwest, including schools in Kansas. We are taking many factors into account in selecting the right institution of higher learning for her to attend next year. The fact that this treatment modality is not even an option for her, while remaining a resident of Kansas, weighs heavy on that decision process. I stand in support of SB113 for the following two primary reasons:

As a member of the health care community, I understand the importance of evidenced based practice. The evidence related to the efficacy potential of PTSD treatment with medical marijuana as an adjunct to traditional therapies is compelling. Studies have shown that the biological receptor sites that impact PTSD symptoms are highly susceptible to the effects of medical marijuana, and support the argument that medical marijuana is a promising treatment option to reduce debilitating symptoms of PTSD (1).

As a parent, safety and side effects of any treatment is at the front of my mind when making decisions about my child's care, and in helping her advocate for her own care. I admit initial resistance to even the idea of treating her PTSD with a drug that is currently considered illicit in the state where we live. However, when compared to the risk of death from suicide, I was compelled to do more research. More than half of the states in the U.S. have legalized marijuana for treatment of various medical conditions under the supervision of a health professional. By providing state oversight through the legalization of medical marijuana, states offer citizens with these medical conditions the improved safety of regulation, labeling and access to conduct ongoing research (2).

In conclusion, I urge the committee to vote favorably for the passage of SB113. This bill offers an opportunity for Kansas to provide the same medical treatments as our neighboring states in a safe way. This bill offers an opportunity for Kansas to destigmatize and decriminalize effective and life-saving treatment for PTSD and many other conditions. This bill offers my child the hope of a future treatment option that could further decrease her PTSD symptoms, and make her condition more bearable.

1. Hill, M. N., Campolongo, P., Yehuda, R., & Patel, S. (2017). Integrating Endocannabinoid Signaling and Cannabinoids into the Biology and Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. *Neuropsychopharmacology : official publication of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology*, 43(1), 80-102.
2. Klieger, S. B., Gutman, A., Allen, L., Pacula, R. L., Ibrahim, J. K., & Burris, S. (2017). Mapping medical marijuana: state laws regulating patients, product safety, supply chains and dispensaries, 2017. *Addiction (Abingdon, England)*, 112(12), 2206-2216.