

Special Committee on Medical Marijuana

Proponent Testimony

Randall Hardy

Speaker, Kansas Silver-Haired Legislature

Thank you, Mr. Chair and committee members for the opportunity to speak to you today on the important topic of medical cannabis. The written testimony concerning medical cannabis that I have submitted is one of six resolutions that our group has adopted for the 2023 legislative session. My name is Randall Hardy. I am a former state senator and am now Speaker for the Kansas Silver-Haired Legislature.

Seniors most frequently look to medical cannabis and derivatives like CBD to help manage severe pain from injuries and ailments like arthritis, diabetic neuropathy, migraines and cancer. Long-term use of traditional pain treatments like over-the-counter medication and prescription painkillers can be problematic, causing side effects and even addiction. Cannabis is not devoid of side effects, but they are minimal compared to the risk associated with other treatment options.

Medical cannabis use among the elderly is growing, and there is more public acceptance and reduced stigma to its use. Medical cannabis is increasingly viewed as an effective option for management of insomnia and chronic pain. According to one Harvard study, some research noted that cognitive functioning can actually improve when patients use medical cannabis to among other things improve sleep and control pain.

Kansans enjoy having options when it comes to medical care. Cannabis can provide important benefits to Kansans needing care for many conditions. I view medical cannabis as another tool in a doctor's toolbox to help manage chronic pain and to treat problems more prevalent in the senior segment of the population. As for dosage, our group is less mobile than the general population, and would benefit from having access to a 90-day supply of cannabis.

From the state's perspective, if Missouri passes the ballot initiative to legalize recreational cannabis, Kansans will have the ability to cross the border and purchase cannabis the same way they did with alcohol in prior decades. Many Kansans who want or need cannabis for medicinal purposes will have access to cannabis without Kansas passing a bill. But Kansas will miss out of the economic benefits of allowing our citizens to purchase medical cannabis locally.

Please consider the quality-of-life issues that exist with seniors having the ability to use medical cannabis as they would other over-the-counter or prescription medications to combat the discomfort of degenerative diseases. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of the senior population of Kansas, and I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.

2022

SILVER HAired LEGISLATURE RESOLUTION NO. 4004

A RESOLUTION urging the Legislature of the State of Kansas to legalize the expanded medical use of cannabis.

WHEREAS, In 2018, Senate Bill No. 282 was signed into law, which legalized the production, sale, possession and use of the substance cannabidiol and cannabidiol products that contain 0% tetrahydrocannabinol, the psychoactive ingredient in cannabis; and

WHEREAS, Cannabidiol has been shown through research to be an effective treatment for certain seizure conditions, especially in children; and

WHEREAS, In 2018, the United States Food and Drug Administration took the historic step of approving a cannabis-based medicine for the first time, but the Administration has expressed no interest in broadly rescheduling cannabis from a Schedule I substance or descheduling cannabis entirely; and

WHEREAS, Thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia, including three states that border Kansas, have legalized the medical use of cannabis under various circumstances; and

WHEREAS, Kansas parents have relocated their families to other states, where medical cannabis treatment options are legal and available, to improve the quality of life of their children, especially those suffering from seizure conditions; and

WHEREAS, Medical cannabis, especially applications that include tetrahydrocannabinol, has been reported to improve care for patients with: Chronic pain conditions, including pain associated with multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, fibromyalgia, and endometriosis; nausea resulting from various conditions; post-traumatic stress disorder, especially in military veterans; HIV-caused pain and wasting; and other medical conditions: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved by the Silver Haired Legislature of the State of Kansas:* That we urge the Legislature of the State of Kansas to legalize the expanded medical use of cannabis.