

February 16 , 2020

The Honorable Paul Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education , Health and Government Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate office Building
Annapolis, MD.

Re: SB0605 SUPPORT-Public Schools -Medical cannabis -Guidelines for Administration to Students

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the EHEA Committee:

My name is John Torsch and I urge you to support SB0605 that will give children an equal chance to perform to the best of his/her ability in the public school setting.

Growing up I was stuck in a nightmare, unable to control my body or thoughts. I was born with Tourette Syndrome and heavily medicated as a child from age 6-13. These medications included first generation anti-psychotics which were ineffective and had devastating side effects that still last to this day. For years, doctors warned me about how dangerous cannabis would be for me to use. That first joint at age 13 did for me what no pill or an entire team of John's Hopkins' doctors ever could. Not only did my tics slow down, they disappeared. I wasn't depressed or crippled with anxiety. The merry-go-round in my mind slowed down enough for me to actually process a thought and focus on a book. I was well behaved and the rage stopped. The medications were immediately discontinued and I never saw another mental health doctor again, ever. 22 years later and I'm living a happy healthy, productive life and cannabis is still the only substance that I use to successfully treat the symptoms of my Tourettes and comorbidities.

Because of the laws and stigma surrounding the plant, I was forced to smoke poor quality, untested and potentially dangerous cannabis from Mexico. While I'm certainly not advocating for children to be able to smoke joints like I was forced to, I am advocating that they are able to utilize the specific type of cannabis products available these days which can be properly dosed and are lab tested. If I were able to legally medicate using these oils and tinctures when I was a child, maybe I would have stayed in high school longer instead of earning my GED. Please allow minors with medical cannabis recommendations to utilize their lab tested and safe medication in school, the same way we allow other drugs with FAR more harmful side effects such as opiates and benzodiazepines to be dispensed.

Sincerely,

John Torsch
Co-founder/Director of Special Programs
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