



Medical Cannabis for
Maryland's Kids with Epilepsy

To: Members, Health and Government Operations Committee
Date: February 19, 2020
Re: Support for HB 617 Public and Nonpublic Schools - Medical Cannabis - Policy for Administration During School Hours and Events
Subject: Testimony of Gail Rand, Mom to Logan Rand, who has epilepsy & autism

Madame Chairperson, Madame Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon. My name is Gail Rand. I've been advocating for medical cannabis here in Maryland since 2013 on behalf of my now 10-year old son, Logan, who has epilepsy and autism.

My advocacy led me to a role in helping bring safe medicine to patients as a Founder of ForwardGro, the first licensed Grower in Maryland. Currently I am the CEO of my own consulting company, grand consulting, in which I help cannabis companies all over the world with financial advisory.

But today, I'm speaking as a patient advocate to educate on behalf of the kids who are unable to communicate their support for this important bill. My son, Logan, is now seizure free on medical cannabis, which has unequivocally saved his life. Although he still has special needs, his quality of life has skyrocketed.

Logan takes his medicine in the morning and evening, which works for him, likely because of his metabolism. So, although access at school is not an issue for Logan, other kids aren't so lucky. I feel strongly that kids should have access to this medicine at school. The General Assembly overwhelmingly supported the medical cannabis bill in 2014, proving that they believe it is medicine. Therefore, medical cannabis should not be treated any differently than other medicine.

The school nurses in AACPS have given Logan Topamax that turned him into a zombie and didn't help with his seizures. They've given him Onfi, a benzodiazapene that he took 2 years to wean, because the side effect of weaning is seizures. And it didn't help him at all. They've given him Lamictal, which has a potential side effect of death, but that didn't help with his seizures.

I understand that a protocol would need to be developed since a medical provider's recommendation does not include dosing. That is a simple limitation that can be overcome by doing a slight adjustment to a medical authorization form. School nurses have a right to legal protection, which should be clearly established in the



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implementation of this bill. Their protection and our kids' ability to access their medicine are, by no means, mutually exclusive.

Our kids have a right to free and appropriate education, which should not be limited because they need access to a relatively benign medicine that can save their lives.

For all of these reasons, I strongly support House Bill 617. Thank you!