

March 5, 2020

Chairman Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Opposition to HB 1400 – written testimony for the record

I am writing to you as not only a concerned citizen, but as an Emergency Room (ER) health care provider, in absolute opposition to any consideration of legalizing marijuana or cannabis for individuals 21 years or older. Legalizing marijuana or cannabis – whatever you choose to call it, in order to tax it is extremely short sighted in my opinion. The costs to legalizing it both tangible and intangible are very high.

I have watched with dismay as a friend's son, who was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and who was told in no uncertain terms that he should not use marijuana – medical or otherwise, get hopelessly entrapped by the 'panacea' of medical marijuana. As an aside, he was not only taking his psychiatric medications, he had recently gotten a medical marijuana card from another provider – who knew absolutely nothing of his history. . **It was not long before he made not one, but two trips to the ER because he had become psychotic. He was placed twice, at a cost to taxpayers. It is not cheap to put people through rehab.** Those are the tangible costs. The intangible costs? This friend has gone through some of her retirement funds; had countless sleepless nights and seen her son, now a young adult, morph into someone who is not the same. I am sad that her son may very well not ever see his full potential. What a hefty price tag to pay!

Within the past year, we have seen patients come in – one crashing the family car while under the influence. The family devastated. The kid thinking – 'it's only marijuana.' Really? Do we want more of that? It seems to me that 'safety' is one of the areas that state and local governments should concern themselves with, not looking for more revenue, as County Executive Marc Elrich recently stated. It's irresponsible.

What I have presented is really just a very small sampling – a very small sampling of stories that I have witnessed over the years.

Interestingly enough, I have had my fair share of patients who have 'medical marijuana' onboard. No, not their medical marijuana, but rather getting it from a friend, who has a medical marijuana card – a whole other business has been created. But often they are cutting it – with what? It's a gamble. Otherwise where is the profit?

It is well known that the human brain continues to develop until the age of 26. Why are we looking to promote something that will dumb down these teenagers and young adults?? Why would you promote a product that can shave up to 8 IQ points off a developing brain. Not only that the THC contained in most strains of marijuana these days is quite high –the marijuana of today, "it's not the drug of your youth. Teenagers and younger kids are minimizing marijuana which is being minimized by our political

leaders and other adults around them. Marijuana, then what's next, benzodiazepines? Because that nightmare not be too far off in the future. .

We have seen what legalization has done in DC. People are openly smoking it – yes probably an enforcement issue, but nonetheless, smokers have been given the green light and they are out there. In DC they are out smoking in the street – where is the enforcement? I note the provision in HB 1400, which states that ‘cannabis signs may not be placed within 500 feet of an elementary or secondary school.’ That signage is still too close. Additionally, there is no mention of high schools – most of those students are under 21 years of age. There is also nothing about allowing signs near colleges, either – where developing minds are thriving.

I would highly recommend that this committee actually focus on the rules governing these medical marijuana businesses. There are many aspects that should be considered in this vein. For example, Arizona is looking to cap the THC in medical marijuana to 2 percent. In the words Of Supreme Court Justice, Louis Brandeis: States are the laboratories of Democracy – learn from them.

Oppose HB 1400.

Sincerely, Sandy Brown

s.alexandratuttle@gmail.com