

Bryson Ripley
Resident of Shawnee, Kansas
Proponent SB135
For the Committee on Federal and State Affairs

March 15th, 2023

Chair Thompson , Members of the Committee,

I'd like to thank everyone for giving me time to speak in regard to Senate Bill 135. My name is Bryson Ripley. I am a resident of Shawnee in Senate District 10, and I am a proponent of this bill.

I served 5 years in the Marine Corps as a 5831 Correctional Specialist. Now I volunteer to serve my community with a national veterans group called Common Defense. I am also a trained organizer at the Veterans Organizing Institute.

As a veteran who suffers from medical issues related to my service, cannabis has helped me tremendously. I personally have used cannabis before to help treat anxiety and depression, as well as other service related issues. Unfortunately, using cannabis is illegal in Kansas, so using it is not possible for me anymore. I would like to be given the chance to legally benefit from the use of cannabis.

Through my work with Common Defense and Veterans Organizing Institute, I have spent a great deal of time speaking with other veterans from across the country about the issues that concern them the most. From my personal experience; the legalization of cannabis is a top priority. A huge number of veterans I've met use, or would like to use cannabis medicinally. They use it for things like managing pain from service related injuries, and lessening the symptoms of PTSD.

According to data from Veterans Affairs, Kansas has a veteran population of 195,434. That is roughly 6.6% of the Kansas population. How many of those veterans do you think would benefit from medical cannabis use? With states all around Kansas legalizing, I think it is time to afford every Kansas veteran the opportunity to use medical cannabis. This is a veteran issue. Support Kansas veterans. Legalize medical cannabis. Thank you for your time.