

March 15, 2023
SB 135 Proponent Testimony
Mandy Sohosky, Self

Chairman Thompson & Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to share my story with you today. My name is Mandy and I am an advocate for medical marijuana.

I would like you to think back to the last time you got “brain freeze”. That sudden piercing pain from eating ice cream, or drinking an icy drink too fast. It grabs all your attention, your friends snicker, and then it passes. Now I’d like you to imagine a brain freeze for 8 days. You need to cook, clean, parent, work etc. All with that screaming pain in your head. That is my life. For 23 years, I have had chronic migraines. They occur 2-5 days a week. That means I have spent half of the last 20 years in pain.

My migraines can last up to 10 days straight. I can’t go to movie theaters, I miss out on family movie nights, I haven’t been able to attend church regularly in years and I grew up going twice a week or more. I even went to a Christian college. Now I am unable to attend a full service due to the pain. Even my kid’s music concerts and sporting events – I miss half of them. My kids want me to go, to enjoy their work.

It’s so hard to go to family events. I almost always have to leave early. The sounds of the kids playing together make my heart happy, but my head throb.

I’ve tried all the remedies. I’ve done every test. I’ve had all the meds that can prevent them, all the meds that can stop them, trigger point injections, sleep studies, MRI’s, bloodwork. I’ve tried the “crazy” things, like daith piercings, use this specific body wash, take this supplement, do this exercise. I’ve done the body work – physical therapy, limited diet, chiropractic, and acupuncture. The doctors don’t have anything else to try, so they prescribe me muscle relaxers and opioids. When I picked up my last refill at the pharmacy, the pharmacist asked if I needed them to request Narcan for me to have on hand. Narcan is an emergency medication to reverse an opioid overdose. Opioid pain relievers have become and epidemic across the United States – yet that is the only thing Doctors can give me for the pain?

Even at my normal prescription levels, the Pharmacist has to ask me if I want to keep an emergency overdose drug in my house because opioids are so dangerous.

A few months ago, I was in a state where medical marijuana is legal and so I nervously tried it. Why not, I had tried everything else. Those of you who understand chronic pain will feel this with me – 10 mins later the pain was gone. I cried. I had never, in 20 years, had a medication relieve the pain. I’ve had it numbed, I’ve had the level drop down to “bearable”, I’ve had them put me to sleep, etc. but never eliminated the pain.

There is a solution for my migraines. It’s not a perfect cure, but it would help me be present to support my kids. I could attend their karate practices, I could listen to their music. I could be there for an uninterrupted movie night.

There is a solution for my pain – please allow me to use it. Please. While my kids are still young, while my parents are still here, I have so many memories waiting to be made. Please allow me to make them. Before it’s too late.