

January 20th, 2012

Written testimony in support of Kansas HB 2330

I am a Registered Republican voter. My name is Sarah (Elizabeth Keating Vogelsberg) Smith.

I'm also a Medically Retired Lenexa Kansas Police Officer/Detective with 20 years of service on the Lenexa Police Department. I come from a large family of current, & retired, Certified Kansas Law Enforcement Officers. During my career, I worked a variety of cases & assignments.

Some of those include: 1 year assignment to the Johnson County Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Squad, 4 years as a Certified Homicide Investigator for the Kansas City Area Metro Squad and 5 years as a Field Training Officer for New Recruits in the Patrol Division. As a Patrol Officer for 12 years, I worked every kind of case imaginable: Crimes Against Persons, Against Property, Domestic Violence, Accidents, DWI's, Illegal Drug Cases, Suicides, Homicides, Rapes & Armed Robberies. As a Detective for 6 years, my work involved most of the above mentioned types of cases & more. I paid particular attention to familiarizing myself with Crime Scene Investigation, Interview Techniques, current Federal, State & Local Criminal Laws & Traffic Laws. I also worked hard to maintain well-above-average physical strength & conditioning. These things were done in order to provide the Community, & the Police Department, with a dedicated, dependable, knowledgeable & physically fit employee.

Unfortunately, 8 years ago I was forced to Medically Retire due to the constant pain of Cervical Spine Disease, Spinal Stenosis and Osteoarthritis in my neck. Since that time, I've developed Arthritis in my left foot, a herniated lumbar disc and Fibromyalgia.

I strongly support investigation, arrest and prosecution of individuals involved in any type of illegal drug use. I have never used any illegal drug...nor will I ever do so. I have never, and will never, support any type of recreational drug use.

That said, I'd like to explain why I feel a need to address the issue of the Legalization of Cannabis for Medical Use only.

For well over a decade I have been, and continue to be, in Chronic Pain every single day. I've gone to great lengths to obtain relief from the pain. The following is a list of some of the many treatment options I have tried for my conditions:

Ibuprofen, Celebrex, Naproxen, Nabumetone, Tylenol, Aspirin, Gabitril, Celexa, Savella, Cymbalta, Oral Steroids, Steroid shots in my neck and elbow, Dry shots (w/o medication) in my neck and back, Tramadol, Flexeril, Tizanidine, Zolpidem, Lidoderm numbing patches, Hydrocodone, Heat Packs, Ice Packs.

The following is a list of other treatment options I have tried, with little or no success:

Physical Therapy (3 times, 6 weeks at a time), Chiropractic Treatment (9 months), Acupuncture (4 months), Exercise (Walking, stretching...ongoing...when I am able to do so) & Meditation (Ongoing.)

As you can ascertain, I've gone to great lengths to find relief and regain a better quality of life.

It has been an extremely time-consuming, and very expensive, Decade-long quest.

Some of these treatments do help...but only for a few short hours a day. Unfortunately, now I suffer from several painful & dangerous side effects from some of my prescription medications, which will be further explained later in my testimony.

So, approximately 2 years ago, I began doing my own research (via the Internet & television program specials) on the Medical Use of Cannabis for people in Chronic Pain. I'm certain you've heard/read/seen some of the arguments on the Pros and Cons of this type of treatment.

Prior to that, I had an enormous amount of preconceived ideas & deep-seated doubts regarding what the results would reveal. At first, all I could picture in my mind was groups of "Recreational using, lazy, uneducated and brain-damaged" people claiming their Marijuana usage was the "be all, end all" answer to every Prescription Drug on the market.

But to my surprise, that was a false notion. What I discovered was this ancient, out-lawed, illegal, controlled substance was actually HELPING normal, everyday people who happen to be living with Chronic Pain & other serious medical conditions. As a matter of fact, I discovered it was greatly IMPROVING their quality of life. And not just a few of them...almost every single one of them!

In my opinion, this is one option that could offer me hope. REAL HOPE to help alleviate my life of endless, daily, pain. The medications I take cause nausea, extremely painful & embarrassing gastrointestinal side effects, uncomfortable & embarrassing bladder incontinence almost every time I sneeze, cough or laugh and dangerous long-term side effects it may cause within my liver & other vital organs. Two of my medications have dangerously affected my blood pressure. It used to be 95/65. Now it's often 145/95...or higher. If it continues to increase, I will have to start taking medication for patients with high blood pressure.

Perhaps Cannabis will help to offer relief for me & hundreds, or thousands, of other people like me. Perhaps it will not. While it is illegal in this state, I will not use it. But I believe, based on my own research, it appears to be worth a try because I deeply want my quality of life to be so much better.

By "better quality of life," I mean it would be fantastic if I didn't spend most of my day unable to even get outside and take a walk. I'd like to, once again, enjoy spending some pain-free,

relaxing & fun times with the people I dearly love...My husband, son, Mom, five brothers & sisters, my Mother & Father-in-law, 8 brother & sister in-laws, 20 nieces & nephews and several good friends. I miss them & not being able to participate with them is heart-wrenching. I miss many of their birthday parties, sporting events, their school concerts, art shows, plays, fundraisers & our family get-togethers. *My family & friends love me back and they want me to be involved in their lives, too!*

Neither you, nor I, want to turn the State of Kansas into a place filled with people, who are not ill, gaining easy access to this treatment option. There are many ways to prevent that from happening. I will be happy to discuss my thoughts on that subject with you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this statement regarding this important issue. I hope you will strongly consider allowing the use of Medicinal Cannabis in the State of Kansas.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah E.K.V. Smith

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