

November 23, 2009

Honorable Frank Oliver  
Room 34, East Wing  
PO Box 202195  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2195

Dear Honorable Representative Oliver:

I would like my letter submitted as written testimony for the hearing on December 2, 2009 in opposition of HB 1393.

Two weeks ago, my family had a memorial service for my brother, David, who died two years ago from a heroin overdose. When he was younger my brother experimented with the gateway drugs of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. His life was littered with periods of substance abuse scattered amount times of sobriety. The last drug he turned to was street heroin. His addiction had spiraled out of control and he tried to get help. After being in a Detoxification program for three days and planning to go to a Substance Abuse Treatment Center in another two days, David used again. The last thing he would ever do was inject a needle into his arm.

Marijuana is one of many addictive drugs and is classified as such with good reason. As stated by the Drug Enforcement Administration "marijuana has a high potential for abuse, has no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States, and has a lack of accepted safety for use under medical supervision." The negative effect of using the substance for medicinal purposes outweighs any possible positive benefits that may be experienced. Even under the proposed disguise of medicinal marijuana, the side effects of using the drug will continue to be: higher risk of lung cancer, heart attacks, breathing difficulties, strokes, and overdoses and death from these complications.

Like most other Pennsylvanians, I have had loved ones and family members diagnosed with cancer. I would not approve of any treatment method for them that would put them at higher risk for death and greater medical complications. In addition, using marijuana as a treatment for illness will contribute to the expense of the already struggling health care system in PA. Marijuana addiction is a progressive disease that should not be used to treat other diseases when healthier, approved alternatives are readily available to everyone.

Marijuana use is progressive, destroys bodies and lives, and ruins families. Marijuana is known for its destructive side effects, addictive qualities, and not approved by the FDA for medical use and therefore should not be approved for medical use. Doing so would be a great disservice to those whom live and work in the Commonwealth. Please continue to protect and serve our families, communities, and citizens of Pennsylvania by not approving HB 1393.

Thank you for your time and attention,

  
Lisa Stalnaker

125 Hibridge Circle  
Lewistown (Mifflin County) PA 17044