

TESTIMONY OF PAULINE TORRENCE
BEFORE THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ON HB 1393 COMPASSIONATE USE ACT OF 2009

Good morning, Chairmen Oliver and Baker, and Members of the Committee. I am Pauline Torrence from Douglassville, Berks County.

I am submitting this testimony to urge passage of the Compassionate Use Act of 2009 by this Committee and the General Assembly.

Several years ago I was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia Syndrome which affects the muscles and soft tissue. Chronic pain in the muscles, fatigue, sleep problems, and painful tender points on certain parts of the body are also a part of this syndrome. Prior to my illness, I had worked as a full time social worker serving children and families in my community. I was active, independent, productive, and healthy. Now I am unable to work or live normally because of this syndrome.

Treatment for me has been difficult, frustrating, expensive, and time consuming. I've had physical therapy, aqua therapy, epidural shots in the spine, pain management, and an assortment of dangerous pharmaceutical drugs. Thus far, no traditional treatment has been successful in alleviating my chronic pain. Severe pain has been a part of my life for so long that I can't remember what it feels like to be pain free.

Traditional medical treatment has not worked for me. That is why I believe that this Bill 1393 is an important step towards treating people such as me. Sometimes treatment requires going beyond the scope of traditional medicine. The use of medical marijuana goes beyond that scope. We are present today because we are fighting for the right to have a normal life, a life without pain or suffering. We want the opportunity to become pro active in our medical treatment without fear of criminal prosecution. We desire to elevate the quality of our lives with dignity for first ourselves, so that we can become productive, no longer a burden to our families, friends, and our communities.

Thomas Jefferson said, "Liberty is the collective body, what health is to every individual body. Without health no pleasure can be tasted by man; without liberty, no happiness can be enjoyed by society."

My testimony is submitted according to the law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Rules of the House of Representatives. Thank you for this opportunity to be heard.

Sincerely,



Dated: 10/14/2009

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