

TESTIMONY OF MARK RAINEY II
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 Mark Rainey II from Allegheny County.

I am submitting this testimony to urge passage of the Compassionate Use Act of 2009 (HB 1393) by this Committee and the General Assembly.

I am a college student with irritable bowel syndrome. I lived with it all of my life, taking prescription medicine to keep it under control. However, these prescription medicines have so many side effects that are just as bad, if not worse than, the symptoms of IBS. These include: constipation, dependence, decreased blood flow to the colon, etc. When I entered college, I was tempted with pot. Before this, I had never even tried alcohol (I grew up in a very religious household in Alabama). However, I read about the possible benefits that cannabis has for IBS patients and, to my surprise, how safe it actually is. I smoked the pot that night, and I've never looked back. When I smoke cannabis, even once a day, my stomach aches subside and I'm able to use the rest room normally (where previously, I'd literally have to always be near a toilet just in case).

I believe that this simple herb has also contributed to helping me in many other ways. As a child, I was diagnosed with ADHD and a form of higher functioning autism. I used to take Adderal, but the side effects of the pills were frightening to my parents and me, especially when I started twitching without knowing it. When I smoke pot, my mind is able to clear and rest. Before, my mind would be so overloaded, I'd have anxiety attacks over small things like talking to people or being in a group. Now, even after a small amount of pot, I'm able to be myself around others. For the first time in my short 20 years on Earth, I have a girlfriend. Believe it or not, cannabis has even motivated me. Since I began medicating, my grades have improved from Cs to As and Bs and I've been attending the local YMCA (I've lost 130 pounds! From 300 to 170).

Cannabis is not addictive. At the time of writing this, I'm pretty broke and out of weed. The only reason I wish I had more pot is because I have to go to work, and I can't stay out of the bathroom for long and my stomach is bothering me. It's not withdrawals, it's the same IBS symptoms I've lived with all of my life.

Marijuana has freed me. I just hate being a criminal for it. I won't even drive away without buckling my seatbelt, because I'm a safe minded individual who prides himself on following the law. This bill is an opportunity for me to continue medicating safely without adverse side effects of the dangerous pills the medical community continues to shove down our throats. It also will allow me to stop dealing with shady drug dealers, which is a major plus for me.

Thank you for this opportunity to be heard.

Sincerely,

Dated: 11/27/2009