

TESTIMONY OF Ian Buchanan
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 Ian Buchanan and I am from Reading, PA.

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 have attention deficit disorder, and I was prescribed Adderall to help this condition. I used Adderall all throughout elementary school. When I got to Jr. high school, I was prescribed Ritalin, and switched to that. I took Ritalin up through to my senior year. It made me feel so sick that I wouldn't eat at lunch. As I got older, I would stop taking it for short periods of time.

I started using marijuana recreationally in tenth (10th) grade, and I never looked at it as medicine until I finally stopped taking the Ritalin for good. As you may be aware, fully stopping usage of Ritalin and other ADD drugs requires long amounts of time. Looking back to those days when I was prescribed to Ritalin, I realize now that I was a total mess on the drug. Since I began using marijuana to treat my ADD, I have noticed a complete change, and so has my family. When I've not medicated with cannabis, my mind tends to race, I can't hold on to a thought, I feel uncomfortable, sometimes my behavior becomes hyper, and I have a hard time controlling myself.

I noticed when I got to college that I was having difficulty sitting down and studying, so I started smoking before I sat down to my studies. Even the smallest amount of cannabis calms my mind down enough so that I can actually get my thoughts together, sit down, and really do what I need to do to achieve good grades. After finding out about how many children/adults have died from Ritalin use, and after finding out that it's more or less a synthetic version of cocaine, I have decided never ever to return to using Ritalin or other prescription medications to treat my disorder. If I could grow it in the privacy of my own home, or go to a shop where I could legally purchase it with a doctors approval, I wouldn't have to deal with sketchy drug dealers and inadequate, poorly grown marijuana.

I don't know where I would be today without cannabis. It has given me the mental strength to stay focused, and the ability to sit still and pay attention when I need to the most. I attend Berks Technical institute for Business Management and Administration, I am an A-B student, and without cannabis, I would not be receiving the grades I am today. I know there are hundreds of young children and adults like my self who struggle with ADD/ADHD every day of their lives, and indeed suffer from symptoms like impulsive behavior, and racing thoughts. A very close friend of mine has a 6 year old brother who takes Ritalin for ADD. When I think about what all that Ritalin is doing to that poor child's brain heart and liver, and then think about how many bottles of it he will most likely consume in his lifetime, I literally shudder. When I think about how much Ritalin and Adderall I have consumed in my life, I cringe, because I know the damage it was doing to me.

I ask that you look at this with common sense, and without bias. How much longer must we wait without sufficient medicine, without quality medicine, without protection from the law? How much longer must we wait till we can be looked at as patients and not drug addicts? This isn't about getting high, this isn't about getting stoned and having a grand old time, the people giving their testimonies today are real patients, with real medical needs, and it is the states responsibility, the Representatives' and the Senators' responsibility, and this Committee's responsibility to ensure the rights of its citizens.

I am here today to testify to the members of this committee with utmost honesty, that cannabis effectively and efficiently treats my mental disorder, and in my opinion as well as in the opinion of others, I think Cannabis should be legalized as medicine for Pennsylvanians because it is their American right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and real medication that eases their troubled hearts.

Thank you for this opportunity to be heard.

Ian Buchanan

Sincerely,



Dated: 11 / 11 /2009

Ian Buchanan
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