

Dear House, Health, and Human Services committee- Chairs Liebling & Schultz,

My name is Joan Barron, I live in Ramsey, MN . I'm currently in our state's medical cannabis program.

In 2001 I took a traumatic fall and damaged my pudendal nerve which is the main motor and sensory nerve of the pelvis. After exploring all available options for pain management, the only thing that gave me any quality of life was prescription opiates such as methadone and hydromorphone. I had no idea kids were stealing medications and sharing them with friends. In 2014 we lost our 29-year-old son (Adam) to the opioid epidemic

It was only a year ago that I learned it wasn't just Adam that became addicted to heroin. I discovered he shared those same medications with his best friend at the time who continues to struggle with sobriety to his day.

I am now three years into the medical cannabis program, and we still have no raw cannabis flower. For over three years my husband and I have sacrificed a lot of money for my right to choose a safe alternative for pain control. For three years we have gone without a vacation, a second car, and many home improvements because we simply cannot afford my medications on top of everything else. We are pushing 60 and are running out of time.

I will never understand the logic in denying people that form of medicine.

A couple facts you may not be aware of:

- There were 87,000 fatal drug overdoses from October 2019-September 2020?
- 75% of people who misuse prescription opioids get them friends or relatives?

Right now , there is another family sitting where we were, and praying it doesn't end the same as our story.

Fast forward to this past year, my only other living child had emergency surgery last March at the U of M. It was a dirty Krones surgery due to a perforated bowel in three areas. She had an enormous amount of physical pain, so we tried products from the dispensary, but none seemed as effective as it was for me. We found ourselves in a frightening place

We only have the illicit market in Minnesota as our only other choice.

Because no other option was available, I was able to buy raw cannabis flower that I turned into butter. My daughter's mental health, lack of sleep, the pain, and all her other symptoms were helped by cannabis I bought on the illicit market. Then, eight weeks ago she had to have all her remaining colon removed along with the large intestine and rectum. She will turn 40 tomorrow. The pain she is in now will continue for the foreseeable future and will require long term pain management.. SHE CANNOT AFFORD OUR PROGRAM, even with the discount.

In the past four months I've been able to get off ALL my breakthrough meds and ALL my Gabapentin. I was taking 1200 mg 3 times a day for almost 19 years. This is because cannabis was not available in dispensaries.

I'm in support of full legalization of Cannabis in Minnesota. Everyone should be able to access this plant, everyone should be able to experiment with different strains & dosing to find what works best for them, and sometimes what best for one person is not what works for another.