

April 16, 2021

To the Hon. Committee Members

Hello Members, my name is Chad Hewitt, a registered Republican from St. Paul, Mn. I would first like to start by saying "Thank You for this opportunity". Now, Americans are putting ALL politicians on notice. We are sick and tired of politicians across the board and keep in mind elections are around the corner. So, I do have concerns about the cannabis industry in Mn. A quick background on me. Born in the early 70's and a DARE child. I come from a community serving family and was against cannabis and went down the law enforcement/EMS route. I was fortunate enough to work at both the private and state-run correctional facilities here in MN. I also had the distinct pleasure of serving on two rural EMS services and a metro area Sheriff's Office reserve unit. I have also had the unpleasant experience of doing CPR on my 4-month-old nephew, helping a rural medical examiner remove and exam a family of 3 involved in a fiery crash, as well as the person that caused it; plus, other events. During those years I battled with neck pain and PTSD's. Then in 2007, I had neck surgery that left me with continued pain, a metal plate and screws in my neck. I was prescribed several different medications; 2 different opiates(long & short acting), NSAIDS, different muscle relaxants, anti-depressants and a few others. I became physically addicted to the opiates; and the muscle relaxants put me into outer space where I could barely function. The addiction affected EVERY aspect of my life(couldn't pay bills, missed family events and work). I was forced to resign a beloved job; I hide the addiction rather than admitting it, and now am a product of "the system". Then a changing point in my life. While going through bad withdrawals, a friend gave me cannabis. I was able to get on the medical cannabis program. I have been on/off the program due to cost & selection. With the help of cannabis, I am down to 1 opiate(and a fraction of that dose, and hope to be off completely within 6-8 months) and med. cannabis. Cannabis has allowed me to work at getting my life back and have learned a ton about it. People in the middle class and lower CANNOT afford and/or don't like MN's program. Extremely expensive and extremely selective medications, and in my opinion poor quality. MN's' medical program IS NOT WORKING. People ARE FORCED TO THE UNCONTROLLED BLACK MARKET and WILL CONTINUE to use it until it is legal. Just look at the Vape cart issue a few years back; When people were having lung issues due to people adding contaminants. With cannabis legalization coming to our borders; NOW is the time to make sweeping economic and social equity changes to benefit Mn. H.F. 600 is the best fit for Mn and this country. S.F. 1179 and associated bills will do little to nothing to help Mn. However, it will benefit the two current dispensaries and some of the patients. As to the big organizations that oppose cannabis, they have a vested interest and they have the time and money to pay lobbyist to oppose it. But yet, if they did a completely random and surprise drug test on their organization members, there would be a good percentage that would test positive for THC. Those members will not openly admit they use or support cannabis. They want to keep their jobs just like politicians do. We all don't want minors to obtain or be exposed to cannabis. We strongly support money going to the educational system and for public education. I know most cannabis users would support tax money going to the Dept of Education for educating future generations about the truth of cannabis, Dept Health and Human services for research and support, Public Safety to enforce cannabis laws, Dept. of Ag. to educate and support farmers. There is a multitude of industries that support the cannabis industry. In closing, please support H.F. 600 it allows for safe and responsible use of cannabis both medically and recreationally. Feel free to contact me with any questions at chadhewitt65@gmail.com

Thank you for your time.

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