

Federal and State Committee
Topic: Medical Cannabis
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Room # 346-S
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To the Committee Members and the Chair,

My name is Mark Barlow. In 2006 I was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the unfortunate result of two major car accidents. I underwent two facial reconstructive surgeries, but have carried the physical and psychological scarring ever since. I've actively engaged in therapy since that time, ranging from one-on-one, to group, to art therapy, to EMDR treatment.

I have been on anti-depressants, anti-anxieties, and anti-nightmare pharmaceuticals. The side-effects of these medicines included gross weight loss, constant dry heaving, loss of emotions, mental malaise, and, unfortunately, heightened nightmares. I have pursued yoga, guided Buddhist meditation, and professional lifestyles tailored around serving my community to the best of my abilities, applying the hard lessons I've learned towards benefiting those around me.

I am haunted by regular intervals of night terrors and sleep paralysis. I have suffered additional trauma from accidents incurred by these incidents of terrified and confused waking. I have rarely felt safe in my own bed and I have remained single for most of this time, stemming from a desire not to subject any partner to the rigors and stressors of my disorder.

My sole reprieve has been the intermittent use of cannabis. Through this tool and after eleven years of silent and private suffering, I have finally been allowed to sleep undisturbed. Since incorporating cannabis into my life, I have discovered a home in community theatre, where I am allowed to safely express the emotions and sensations bounded by the turmoil of my past.

2020 was a landmark year of trauma in our society. As I give this testimony, Kansans without hope of relief are hanging themselves in basements; or drowning themselves in alcohol, or willfully overdosing on pills; or sticking barrels into their mouths and pulling the trigger. I've already lost too many people to despair.

I believe that opening the availability of cannabis to Kansans afflicted by traumas and stressors can - and will - release much of the psycho-social tensions continuing to escalate throughout our society. It is incumbent upon us all to provide this tool of healing to those most in need of it.

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