

# Written testimony to the Kansas House of Representatives

## Committee on Federal and State Affairs

By Leigh Zarda Carr BSN, RN

February 22, 2021

Good Morning Members of the Committee,

First off I want to thank you for this opportunity for this hearing and the chance to finally bring medical cannabis to Kansas.

My Name is Leigh Zarda Carr and I am a mother of a son with special needs and a Registered Nurse for 15 years now. My son was diagnosed with Autism just last year. His Autism diagnosis went undiagnosed as Sensory Processing Disorder for 3 years. In these last 3 years we choose to medicate our son with CBD instead of pharmaceuticals. We chose this route as we did not want to give our at the time 4 year old adderall. I myself was on adderall and it did not do me any favors except it was my entrance drug to many many other pharmaceuticals. I myself was on a merry go round of them for many years until I found CBD and was able to get off 5 daily pharmaceuticals. So when the time came to medicate my son I knew to not start him on the road I was on. In Kansas we are only allowed CBD isolate and this is far from what my child truly needs to be his best self. Numerous studies have shown full plant medicine is the best for Children with Autism providing the most relief from their symptoms.

I would like to point out to you our daily lives with autism and many other children in the State of Kansas who have not had the opportunity to be free to heal with Medical Cannabis. In Kansas, families and their children have not had the opportunity to heal with cannabis, many families have had to leave the state to our neighboring states that have been able to get their lives back due to access to Medical Cannabis. I personally get to watch children heal across the state line in Missouri, how is it fair that mothers and fathers get to watch their children walk, talk, and become non-violent just ten miles away from our home, while we have to constantly spend every ounce of energy we have just to make sure our son is safe. The lives of parents with children with autism can also be greatly improved with access to cannabis for their children, it's not just the child who benefits its the whole family that gets to benefit, parents, siblings, even grandparents who may get to hear their grandkids talk for the first time and say I love you. Cannabis has the ability to just that. Cannabis can help calm kids so that they are able to function and learn better in school and socialize. It's amazing what Cannabis truly can do for Children with Autism. So tell me why medical cannabis has not been brought to the state of Kansas? Are you ok with denying children the ability to heal in a way they have not seen before? So I ask you please to put the "reefer madness" aside, to look at all the other states who have passed Cannabis as medicine and truly give the patients of Kansas Access to this Medicine. Mind you all those states deemed cannabis as an essential business during the Covid-19 shutdown, an essential business that is being denied to businesses owners in Kansas. That is income money and tax revenue that could go to education , to helping our veterans in the State of Kansas, you are denying all of those. Many parents have had no choice but to leave Kansas to get access to this medicine, often to neighboring states, do not make me be one of them. We have waited too long already, we cannot wait any longer, we must act now, I'm ready to enjoy my son and ready to watch the kids of Kansas heal.

With that said I want to respectfully ask that you either vote no on HB:2184 as it stands, or that you move to amend the language and to add the following to the bill that will protect patients and more importantly children who have qualifying conditions.

As a Nurse with a bachelor's degree in science of Nursing and a mother of a special needs child I have first-hand knowledge and experience with patients on how cannabis can help so many, including children. I have extensive knowledge in the Endocannabinoid system and Cannabis Therapeutics with over 80 hours in continuing education. I own and operate Hari Om Hemp as well as a Cannabis Consulting business for 3 years and counting. I work with several area dispensaries in Missouri and hope to bring Cannabis to Kansas in 2021. To make this an effective bill for all in order to actually those who it is intended to help I am asking to please consider the following...

1) **Add autism to the list of qualifying conditions.**

Children across the autism spectrum can benefit greatly from medical cannabis, while causing less side effects and no known physical long term issues to their bodies. Medical cannabis benefits for ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) has been proven in multiple studies.

a) Bernard Rimland, PhD and Founder of the Autism Society of America (ASA), wrote in an article published by the Autism Research Review International in 2003 that was titled, "Medical Marijuana: a Valuable Treatment for Autism?"

"It is important to keep in mind the distinction between legalizing marijuana for medical uses, which has been done in some states, and 'recreational' drug use which is illegal throughout the U.S. Judging from the evidence in hand, I believe legalization of medical use is justified. Legalizing marijuana for non-medical use (as has been done for alcohol) is quite another issue. Early evidence suggests that in such cases, medical marijuana may be a beneficial treatment, as well as being less harmful than the drugs that doctors routinely prescribe."

b) A study published in August 2020, between University of Catania in Catania, Sicily and Hospital General Universitario Gregorio Marañón in Madrid, Spain, explains how Cannabinoids provided by medical cannabis can have benefits for ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) associated behavioral problems, such as hyperactivity, and sleep disorders, with a *lower number of metabolic and neurological side effects than medications*. Which is very key, as many of the medications that are available have their own set of awful side effects.

c) In a study published in 2019, by the great **Raphael Mechoulam** and others, involved 188 ASD patients treated with medical cannabis between 2015 and 2017. The treatment in the majority of the patients was based on cannabis oil containing 30% CBD and 1.5% THC. Symptoms inventory, patient global assessment and side effects at 6 months were primary outcomes of interest and were assessed by structured questionnaires. After six months of treatment 82.4% of patients (155) were in active treatment and 60.0% (93) have been assessed; 28 patients (30.1%) reported a significant improvement, 50 (53.7%) moderate, 6 (6.4%) slight and 8 (8.6%) had no change in their condition. Twenty-three patients (25.2%) experienced at least one side effect; the

most common was restlessness (6.6%). Cannabis in ASD patients appears to be well tolerated, safe and an effective option to relieve symptoms associated with ASD.

2) **Provide legal protections for parents who elect cannabis as a medication for their children.**

I am asking that you please provide protections for parents and children wanting to choose the path of cannabis as a medication for their children and that children are not discriminated against in schools, sports or other activities. I have seen in other states where parents have to disrupt the class and take their child off school grounds to administer medication and then return the student after doing so. This not only interrupts the child's school and the classroom but also the parents' work schedule to have to leave every day to medicate their child on school grounds.

Children need to be able to consume medication at school on school property and school nurses should be trained in the endocannabinoid system and the basics of Cannabis Sciences.

Parents should not have to be scared or worried about CPS coming to their homes and threatening to take away their children should they choose to get a card for their children to medicate with cannabis. We need to ensure there are protections for parents and children who have qualifying conditions who choose to medicate.

Parents who decide to separate or divorce should not be able to hold Cannabis use against them in court of law.

3) **Allow for Home Grows to ensure clean and quality medicine for children.**

Access to clean consistent quality medicine is a must for children. This can be done by having access to home grows and more importantly access to flower. Having the ability to grow your own medicine and to have control on the way it is grown, how it is grown, and the cultivar you use is very important especially for children with autism and epilepsy. Patients who have epilepsy and autism require specific terpene and cannabinoid profiles to help with their known ailments. In an industry that denies patients access to flower and home grows these patients will simply be left behind without the beneficial medicine that they need and deserve.

Home Grow allows patients and caregivers to select a specific cultivar for the patient's specific ailments that they have given them the best outcome in symptom relief. Not only does home growing allow for you to know exactly what you are getting, you are also able to control a consistent supply of medicine for yourself. In other industries such as Missouri we are seeing a large shortage of medicine for patients and no consistent supply of the same strain from the same cultivators. This is a problem for patients who find relief and then are able to come off pharmaceuticals. What happens when a patient starts seizing because now their dispensary is not carrying the strain that worked for them? They start to seize and are forced back to pharmaceuticals. This can be avoided with patients being able to control their own supply through home grows. Patients should not suffer waiting for medicine to come to market when they have the ability to grow it for themselves. I ask you to please allow home grows and access to flower for all patients.

Thank you for your time,

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## References

### **"Medical Marijuana: a Valuable Treatment for Autism?,"**

Autism Research Review International

Bernard Rimland, PhD, Founder of the Autism Society of America (ASA)

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### **“Cannabinoids for People with ASD: A Systematic Review of Published and Ongoing Studies “**

[Link to Study](#)

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### **“Real life Experience of Medical Cannabis Treatment in Autism: Analysis of Safety and Efficacy”**

[Link to Study](#)

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