

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2284 relating to the administration and definition of pediatric medical marijuana.

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Chairman Lee and Senate Human Services Committee Members, my name is Sandy Smith. I am the parent of a son with severe autism. I am testifying in favor of Senate Bill 2284 relating to the administration of pediatric medical marijuana; and relating to the definition of pediatric medical marijuana.

Our son was diagnosed with autism in 2002. He is now 18 years old and my husband and I are his legal guardians. Our son was doing very well after having received extensive therapy for much of his life. However, our lives changed on July 4, 2018 when he had his first grand mal seizure. We now think about our lives as “before seizures and after seizures.” Our son was put on seizure medication which caused him to engage in very aggressive & dangerous behavior. We spent two years changing and adjusting medication only to see his behavior become even more aggressive and more dangerous. Our son is 6’1” and weighs 255 lbs. He is bigger than both me and my husband.

We were literally afraid of our own son. I was afraid to be home with him by myself and I could not let anyone else be alone with him either. I was aware of others trying medical marijuana to help their children with aggressive behavior. We did some research and decided we would try it. Honestly, it came down to the decision of whether we were going to be able to keep him at home with us anymore. We started in September 2020. Medical marijuana has been life changing for us. Our sons’ behavior has improved significantly. We are no longer afraid of him. Teachers, therapists and others that work with him are reporting significant changes in behavior and cooperation. He is happier, more engaging and his language has even increased slightly. He tolerates haircuts and shaving with no problems. Most importantly he has not hit anyone since got on a therapeutic dose in early October.

Medical marijuana has worked very well for our son but the cost of maintaining certification and the cost of purchasing product with the six percent maximum concentration or amount of THC limit is making it very difficult for us to continue giving this life changing “medicine” to our son.

- The cost of getting and maintaining certification. After determining that the doctors my son regularly sees could not certify him, we had to find an independent provider who would. The provider we found does not accept insurance and my sons’ first appointment was \$470. He must be seen every 3 months and each of those visits is \$300. Since July 28<sup>th</sup>, our out-of-pocket expenses have been \$1,170 to get initial certification and maintain it for less than a year.
- My son is the size of an adult man and limiting him to the pediatric product is absurd. I have to force a large amount of coconut oil base down him in order for him to ingest enough of the active ingredient needed to calm him and reduce aggressive behavior.
- The pediatric product is becoming cost prohibitive. Again, because my son is the size of an adult man we have to purchase a large amount of the pediatric product. The regular price of a 30 ml bottle of tincture is \$150-\$200 per bottle and costs between \$1,050 to \$1,400 per month.

Medical marijuana has been very effective for our son and I urge you to recommend a do pass for SB 2284.

I sincerely thank you for your time today.

Thank you,  
Sandy Smith  
701-367-9855