

Thank you Chairman Weisz and the Human Services committee for allowing me to testify today. I am Gail Pederson, from District 24 in Valley City. I am here to speak for SB 2388 to reduce the penalties for a medical marijuana patient who has broken the rules within our medical marijuana law. I am a Board Certified Special Practice RN in Holistic Nursing, a Cannabis Nurse educator and a member of the American Cannabis Nurses Association's Government Policy and Advocacy Committee. The American Cannabis Nurses association is now a recognized affiliate of the ANA and we are on track towards specialty certification. I am also a moderator for a social media ND Medical Cannabis Support group of over 1500 people.

Our penalties are overly harsh. Lifetime revocation is no answer for a cardholder caught with an infraction to the law. Cannabis nurses in other states have indicated it is usually a fine, not a lifetime suspension. The outline of the new penalties is acceptable though. I have attached the MA penalties for your information.

Seven ND patients had their cards revoked in 2021. While I do not know the other situations, I know, through my advocacy, the hell that Mrs Berger has gone through since this has happened. Cannabis is being recognized as an exit drug. Cannabis, as a harm reduction agent for opioid use and addiction has proven beneficial in reducing or completely eliminating opioid use. Her story is one of desperation, of attempting to turn her daughter away from something that is destroying her life. Her explanation and understanding what she did was wrong should not have a lifetime suspension. The fact we never saw her daughter break the seal on a container should not indicate diversion.

I also want to also dispel the continued myth of diversion of our product. It is minimal. We have the most expensive product in the country. A survey from one of our dispensaries had 4 choices for the questions of "Where did you purchase product last?" It listed our 3 dispensary corporations as an answer and "Out of state" as the 4th choice. This penalty is perpetuating illicit use and cannabis refugees, as Mrs Berger is fearful of becoming.

The century code states "The cardholder may appeal a denial or revocation of a registry identification card to the district court of Burleigh County for hearing. Mrs Berger did check into appealing her revocation to the district court in Burleigh County. The difficulty of finding an attorney and the cost when she did extremely was prohibitive. Cannabis as medicine is legal in our state. It is time to stop making our patients criminals through our overly strict law. Thank you for supporting SB 2388. These are common sense changes. I stand for questions.

Massachusetts Penalties:

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXV/Chapter94G/Section13>

Gail Pederson, SPRN, HN-BC
Be Well Healing Arts, PLLC
bewellhealingarts@gmail.com
701490-2132.