

Thank you Committee Members for your time to listen and consider our opinions, and more importantly the facts.

My name is Michael Nelson NELSON, and I am from Bozeman.

I oppose HB161

I have not been able to find an unemotional and logical reason why we would be considering a repeal to any medical marijuana law.

The vast majority of points against medical marijuana are basically regarding the threat it represents to our communities and kids. The points that have been highlighted by the anti-medical marijuana groups can easily be dismissed on account of lack of merit or factual basis.

One un-truth states that crime is on the rise. Well according to the Montana Law Enforcement Agency Uniform Crime Report in 9 of the 10 categories for types of crime measured, the numbers are lower than in 2004, when I148 was passed. And from 2008 to 2009 when we experienced the beginning of the explosion within the state, the numbers continued to drop in 9 of 10 categories. I guess it is equally hard to relate medical marijuana to an increase, or a decrease in crime..... otherwise this would have been a very good argument for medical marijuana.

I have also read and heard how marijuana is related to 39 traffic fatalities, without any mention of the inability to determine the effects it may have had on the person or whether or not it caused or played a role in the accidents.

I have also read or heard that marijuana is the #1 reason for why kids are in rehab. Data from the National Institute for Drug Abuse shows that Alcohol is responsible for 40 percent of rehab patients, with Marijuana coming in at 16 percent.

As a parent of 2 young children, and a member of our community, I have found no factual based reason to be concerned. I am actually more concerned about educating my kids to be immune to the misrepresentation of the truth.

I know that this is a repetitive point but I think worth restating. If medical marijuana is that big of a threat to our communities and kids that we need to be looking at repeal. How is it that alcohol, which is responsible for half of Montanas traffic fatalities, 40 percent of all rehab patients, and clearly a larger social and health problem, available legally and of unlimited supply to anyone above age 21.

At least medical marijuana offers benefits.

As the husband of a woman with cancer, I cant help but wonder if we are truly concerned about keeping our communities and kids safe, where is the repeal bill for alcohol instead?

Furthermore, let's not forget that the majority of Montanans voted on this issue already, and recent polls indicate that has not changed. The recent Market insight poll showed 0% of Montanans considered drugs the most important issue facing Montana. Down from 1% two years earlier. Added to this number are the 30,000 patients (still growing at 10% monthly) who have been afforded a right you are thinking of taking away, which translates into a significant percentage of Montana that would not feel well represented by this action.

I believe there is a responsibility to deal with and manage this issue. But repealing is a way to avoid it than to deal with it. It doesn't solve the issues, but merely delegates them to another person, at another time, in addition to , leaving a big number of patients to be criminals.