

EXHIBIT 8
DATE 4/6/2011
SB 423

April 6, 2011

Chairman of the Board and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah Baugh and I now live in Helena, Montana.

I would like to thank all of you for the attention that you continue to give this critical law.

I personally appreciate that you are still trying to find workable solutions so that all patients in genuine and critical need may have safe access.

As many of you know already from past testimony I have given this session, I use cannabis daily very successfully to treat my epilepsy. Because I don't respond to modern treatments, cannabis has become critical to my well-being.

You should all know that many seizure disorders do not respond to modern treatments....many do, but many do not. An estimated 42,000 people die every single year from seizures, and thousands more suffer brain damage as a result of their seizures or accidents that occur while seizing. The success that I and other seizure-prone persons have found with cannabis treatment has been ground-breaking and has made the difference between a bed-ridden life and a productive, active one. The success we have found means that we and our loved ones no longer live in daily fear of death and brain damage because we are successfully treating our condition.

I am here to ask you to please amend SB423 to allow probationers and parolees with life-threatening conditions to have safe access to medical cannabis. I know personally of a young man who is on probation actively paying back society for an error in judgment who has a severe seizure disorder and diabetic neuropathy. He remains compliant with the DOC and is complying with all conditions of his probation. This young man's health depends on medical cannabis as he is one of the many persons suffering from seizures, like me, who do not respond well to conventional treatment.

Ladies and gentlemen, this young man has life-threatening seizures just like I do. He has already been punished by the state for his crime. Why are we even considering denying safe access to health care to one of our citizens because of a past mistake?? This seems to me to be cruel and unusual punishment. He has already been punished for his error, and if he is compliant with the state's conditions of his probation, why should he also be required to risk his life simply because the state will not see the difference between his medication and a street drug?? Why should his mother live in fear every day of losing her son?? What makes his life worth less than mine, simply because he is on probation? His judge sentenced him to probation only. What gives the state the right to sentence him to possible death or brain damage? Probation does not make him less ill, ladies and gentlemen.

We all deserve equal access to safe health care. Amending SB423 to include probationers and parolees-at least those with life threatening conditions-is one way in which each of you can help to make that possible for your constituents.

Thank you very much for your time on this issue,

Sarah Baugh