

Hello, my name is Jason Dye – J-A-S-O-N D-Y-E – I served active duty, in the United States Army from January of 2001 to October of 2008. I participated in the cleanup of the Pentagon after September 11th as a part of Operation Noble Eagle and spent 15 months in Iraq from 2007-2008. I am service connected for PTSD, back and knee injuries.

I believe that cannabis is safer and more effective at treating issues with chronic illness, chronic pain, and relatable mental health diagnoses than other currently legal prescription medications. With the number of Veteran's completing suicide and having physical dependence on prescription drugs, cannabis is a much safer treatment that could potentially prevent unnecessary Veteran deaths. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, more than 130 people die daily after overdosing on opioids. This has now surpassed the number of deaths due to fatal car crashes per day, which is roughly 108. There is recent evidence that suggests states who have granted legal access to cannabis, have seen a decrease in the number of opioid related deaths. There has never been a death reported due to an overdose of cannabis, in the thousands of years it has been used medically. In fact, a recent study reported that it would take nearly 1,500 pounds of cannabis to be consumed within 15 minutes to induce a lethal response.

Cannabis has been documented to treat multiple medical conditions in numerous cultures over thousands of years, including within the United States, prior to its ban in 1937. The ban of cannabis in the United States was not backed by medical evidence and was opposed by the American Medical Association, at that time. Fear and paranoia from reports that it caused super human strength and blood lust were reinforced by Propaganda, such as the film "Reefer Madness".

The largest hurdle in the legalization of cannabis appears to be with cognitive dissonance; the discomfort in holding contradictory beliefs. We have been told for more than 80 years that cannabis is bad, that it is a gate way drug, that it causes blood lust, and reefer madness. Terms of "reefer," and "marijuana" were purposefully created to make it sound scarier. It was further negatively propagated by placing terms of "pothead" and "stoner" on those who partook in the use of cannabis. All of these negative beliefs on cannabis have been disproven in one way or another. It does not cause super human ability. It does not induce rage. It is not a gateway drug. The trouble is undoing 80 years of negative programing, instilled by fear and prejudice.

The Veterans I know who have used cannabis to treat their anxiety, PTSD and chronic pain symptoms appear to be and say that they are better regulated emotionally and experience less pain than with prescription Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors, benzodiazepines, and opioids. They require a smaller dosage, less often, with better results per their report and other's observations. According to surveys that have been completed prior to the introduction of this bill, most Kansans who were surveyed are in favor of legalizing cannabis.

The people I know who use cannabis, feel guilt over doing something “illegal.” It works for them; it provides better results, more relief, and is generally safer to use. Because it is a class 1 narcotic, they are conflicted. They understand it is safer than opioids, and alcohol, but because it has been criminalized and demonized, they feel as though they are doing something wrong. They are torn between using something that works and carries a stigma or something that may work while at the same time cause physical dependence. Kansans; Veterans and civilians alike, deserve access to treatment that is proven to promote a better quality of life, has a higher probability of reducing overdose and death, and is less addictive than alcohol and cigarettes. I am asking for you to consider all of the facts and statistics presented, and to separate any potential personal biases. I am asking you to listen to your constituents. I am asking you to make the decision three of our border States already have; to legalize access to medical cannabis.

I want to thank Senator Holland and Representative Karleskint for introducing this bill and allowing me the honor of testifying on its behalf. Thank you for your time.