

My name is Sarah G. Swain. I've been a criminal defense attorney for nearly 20 years in the State of Kansas and in 2018 I was the Democratic nominee for Attorney General, on a platform that included massive criminal justice reform and legalization of marijuana. I am here today to speak as a proponent of the Veterans First Medical Cannabis Act. I support the legalization of marijuana for numerous reasons, and I appreciate that the state of Kansas has taken the small first step of having this hearing.

I'm the daughter of a disabled Vietnam veteran and my entire life has been affected by my father's post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a small child, I and my five siblings watched firsthand as our father struggled with the demons of PTSD. On one occasion, as his children played in the living room, my father put a shotgun in his mouth, desperate to escape the hell of PTSD. I am thankful every single day that my father's suicide attempts were not successful.

Over the years, I watched as my father was able to treat his PTSD with the medicinal use of marijuana. It improved nearly every area of his life and functioning. As I watched my father's progress, I also started educating myself on the medical benefits of medical cannabis. In 2019, there's no argument: cannabis saves lives. The only problem: getting caught with even a small amount of marijuana CAN AND DOES have catastrophic consequences.

It's time for the citizens of Kansas, and especially our veterans, to have the right to choose medical cannabis over pharmaceuticals. Polls show that over 70% of Kansans support legal access to medical cannabis. It's time to legalize.

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