

March 14, 2023

Senate Bill SB 135

Opponent

Submitted by Eileen Fangman

Atchison, KS

Attention Chairman Thompson and members of the Fed & State Committee

I am a recently retired Registered Nurse with many years of experience working in behavioral health. My experience includes working on the locked psychiatric unit at the Harry S Truman Memorial VA in Columbia, MO and most recently as a nurse clinician with the University of Missouri Bridge Program which is a school based pediatric psychiatric program. I am writing to encourage you to **vote no on SB 135**.

While there are many other legal medications and treatment modalities to deal with pain, nausea, and seizure activity, the consequence of smoking just one marijuana joint can be permanently life altering. We all know that marijuana is already available but if it is legalized it will be much more so. It would be naive to believe that the drug would stay only in the hands of the prescribed.

I want to share with you that I have taken care of many young veterans who experienced their first psychotic break after smoking marijuana. They thought they were doing a harmless recreational drug, and their lives were never the same. Depending on the diagnosis, their lives were a cycle of repeated inpatient hospitalizations caused by not taking their prescribed meds, struggles with or the inability to continue school or work, inability to maintain relationships, broken and devastated families, and horrible side effects from the treatment. I saw this over and over. I began asking the veterans if they felt that marijuana was a gateway drug, and the majority of them answered yes.

I have also witnessed the horrible effect of marijuana in the junior high and high school age group. While the psychotic breaks happened predominately with males in my experience, girls also suffered as well. Marijuana use contributed heavily to increased problems with depression and anxiety and led to inhibition of behavior which resulted in stronger drug and alcohol use and risky behaviors.

Please keep these veterans who served our country so valiantly, and the youth of our country-our future-in your mind as you consider the ramifications that your yes vote could have. If you could see what life is like for someone who is dealing with schizophrenia as a result of marijuana use, you never even consider this bill. Please VOTE NO.