

January 24, 2012

Dear Chairperson Landwehr:

As a Kansan and a professional in the substance abuse prevention field for over twenty years, I encourage you and the House Health Committee to not advance discussion of medical excuse marijuana beyond this discussion today. You have heard in the past and will hear again today the medical literature on this issue. What is or is not to be considered medicine is not something to be decided by popular vote. It should be based on science and go through the rigors of any other substance through the Federal Drug Administration process. I encourage you to make policy decisions based on science not stories or fear. Those who seek medical marijuana will provide you an argument that may try to paint you into a corner that you are not compassionate if you are not in favor of medical excuse marijuana. Sixteen other states swallowed this line and the results are not positive.

Kansans have a vision of what the kind of environment in which children will learn and grow. A vote for medical excuse marijuana does not fit any reasonable person's definition of a healthy environment. Consider these examples from states that have medical excuse marijuana. Do you want Kansas to look like this:

- **Montana** – There are more outdoor ads for marijuana dispensaries than for alcoholic products.
- **Los Angeles, CA** - There are more marijuana dispensaries than there are Starbuck coffee shops
- **Colorado** – The average age of marijuana medical card users is 40. Growth in registered users has gone from 41,307 to 127,444 in just two year. Only 2% of these card holders report needing marijuana for cancer.
- **California** – Numerous communities are passing ordinances to get rid of dispensaries.

The research is clear that when perception of harm of a drug goes down, use goes up.

- Medical marijuana states rank **lowest** for the **perception of risk** for smoking marijuana once a month for 12 to 17 year olds.
- Medical marijuana states have the **highest percentage of past month marijuana** use by 12 and 17 year olds.
- Medical marijuana states are clustered at the top of the list in terms of drug addiction and abuse among 12 – 17 year olds.

Additional concerns must also include the implications for employers who have employees with medical marijuana cards, the challenges for law enforcement, the inconsistency of school drug policy and medical cards (yes youth can get these too and do), workplace safety, DUI laws, and the list goes on and on.

Please base your decisions on sound policy, not sound bites and anecdotal stories.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Voth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle Voth
Executive Director
Kansas Family Partnership

