



Kansas Association for the Blind And Visually Impaired

AFFIRMATIVE TESTIMONY: SENATE BILL 536

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 11, 2008

Committee on Health Care Strategies

Let us begin by explaining who we are and why we are appearing concerning this legislation. The Kansas Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Inc. (KABVI) is an all volunteer, consumer advocacy group made up of Kansans who are blind and visually impaired and advocates who are interested in issues relating to blindness and visual impairment. We were founded in Kansas in 1920. We have been an affiliate of the American Council of the Blind, a national advocacy group of people who are blind and visually impaired, since 1961.

Like most individual Kansans, we are generally a conservative body. Our only interest has been to support issues that will bring the best possible quality of life about for blind and low vision Kansans. Our mission ever since our incorporation nearly 88 years ago has been to make every blind or visually impaired Kansan a contributing and self-supporting citizen.

We have many members and associates who have lost vision due to glaucoma. Although leading causes of blindness change from study to study, glaucoma is almost always shown to be among the top three causes of blindness. It is well clinically documented that use of cannabis, in many cases, is effective in reducing glaucoma pressure, thereby assisting in retaining vision and reducing glaucoma pain.

Many of the traditional topical medications used in the treatment of glaucoma have side effects that cause severe pain as well, and in some patients, effective pressure control medications cause severe nausea, headaches, heart damage, and other completely unacceptable side effects.

We are not going to tell you that our Organization has hundreds of members or associates who would benefit from and use cannabis in controlling glaucoma pain and pressure should this Legislation be enacted. The numbers realistically are probably more in single digits. We are aware from the descriptions of many glaucoma sufferers, however, how very severe the pain and suffering of glaucoma can be when this illness and its related pressures can not be controlled by traditional means. We submit that if enactment of this

Legislation can save the vision, or reduce the pain and suffering of even one Kansan, who suffers from glaucoma, and who has not been able to effectively control pressures, or tolerate current traditional treatment methods, adoption of this legislation is worth while. There is no public harm, and potentially tremendous public benefit.

We are attaching a resolution on this subject, adopted by our membership at our fall, 2007 Annual Meeting. Thank you.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, contact:

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