

Compassionate Access to Medical Cannabis Act
House Bill 1135 and Senate Bill 587

My name is Staff Sergeant Richard A. Bond retired Army. I'm also associated with Veteran's Initiative 22 and a board member, Maryland chapter of Americans for Safe Access.

I'm here today advocating with the Connor Sheffield Foundation, supporting this bill. This is important because it allows patients that are getting a better quality of life, using cannabis, to continue the cannabis use in hospitals and other health care facilities.

It was never banned by the Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission, from use in health care facilities, such as our Maryland Hospitals. My understanding is that in 2018, the Maryland Hospital Association in conjunction with most of our hospital systems, took it upon themselves to forbid patients to bring medical cannabis into these facilities. They also directed providers with hospital privileges from discussing cannabis as medicine with their patients.

These policies were put into place without the knowledge or approval of the Maryland Legislators. For the most, the public was and is unaware that this harmful policy is currently in place. Because this policy is in place many medical cannabis users that need acute care, forego it, because they don't want to get back on opioids or other medicines and treatment that cause them to feel worse, not better. Cannabis is giving patients a better quality of life, as you have sat here and listened real patient stories.

The Maryland legislature, patients and patient families, should not be here today, advocating for medical cannabis access in our health care facilities. It was never the spirit of the Maryland Medical Commission, for the Maryland Hospital Association, to take it upon themselves to cause this very real harm to our Maryland constituents.

This is a case of David and Goliath. Who makes these public health decision for our population. Wealthy special interest groups or duly elected officials in the Maryland Legislature? This wrong needs to be corrected. Please support this bill.

Thank you!