

Hello my name is AJ Scharff. I am an Oregonian from Lowell, right outside the Eugene/Springfield area.

I'm here to support SB 301 which would prevent people who legally use marijuana during non-working hours from being fired for doing so.

I have Cyclic vomiting syndrome sometimes referred to as CVS, an increasingly recognized disorder with sudden, repeated attacks of severe nausea, vomiting and physical exhaustion that occur with no apparent cause. The episodes can last from a few hours to several days. Episodes can be so severe that a person has to stay in bed for days, unable to go to school or work and may need treatment at an emergency room or a hospital during episodes. After an episode, a person usually experiences symptom-free periods lasting a few weeks to several months. The attacks happen in three phases 1) prodrome (sweats, turning stomach and dizziness), 2) vomiting, and 3) recovery.

This disorder has had a devastating effect on my life both personally and professionally. I was working for a company de-constructing mattresses for recycling. Living with CVS, I have tried every treatment imaginable. It wasn't until I started treating with medical marijuana was I able to effectively manage this life altering disease. My employer was okay with that for several years and then, out of the blue, decided it was not appropriate anymore. They said they would not recognize my medical marijuana card any longer and any subsequent drug tests needed to indicate I was no longer using marijuana or I would face disciplinary action. They gave me 3 weeks to stop using medical marijuana for my condition.

Not wanting to lose my job, I went to a doctor seeking alternative treatments. I was put on several medications such as Ondansetron, Ranitidine and Phenergan just for the nausea and Ibuprofen, Sumatriptan and Norco (which is a narcotic) for abdominal pain and migraines. Unfortunately, these medications did little to treat my condition. Because I was now taking narcotics, I was not able to function properly.

During this time of heavy med regime, I lost almost 40 pounds and wound up in the hospital to treat my CVS. Come to find out, I was allergic to one of the drugs which caused me to vomit daily. Another one of the drugs made me pass out. I tore up my abdominal wall and esophagus and was vomiting blood when I was admitted. They had to hook me up to an IV just to get my nutrients back up to a normal level.

As a result of these adverse side effects, I told my employer that I had no choice but to discontinue all these pharmaceuticals and go back to using medical marijuana. It was the only thing that was helping with my CVS. My employer told me I could not continue employment with them if I continued to take medical marijuana and to pick up my final paycheck the next day. I felt they were leaving me no choice. I was forced to choose my health over my livelihood. On top of it all, my unemployment was denied because my employer argued that I was terminated for refusing to comply with the conditions of employment.

I have since gone back to using marijuana to treat my CVS. In these months following losing my employment and restarting my treatment with medical marijuana. I am back to my normal weight, have stopped vomiting on a regular basis, and am back to functioning on an almost normal level---well, as normal as I ever will be living with this incurable disease,

If I could have stayed on this treatment in the first place I believe I would have continued to be functional and do my job.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to me today.