

Regarding HB 5104, HB 4271 and SB 660

I am not a medical marijuana patient, nor am I involved in the industry in any way, but I am a concerned citizen who has been made aware of the issues around HB 5104, HB 4271 and SB 660, and I feel I need to lend my voice to the debate.

I am writing to express **my support for passing HB 5104**, and ask that you send HB 4271 back to committee to address the significant issue of inadequate patient safety regulations within it. I just saw a comparison of patient safety standards between HB 4271, SB 660, and legislation of Colorado, Connecticut, Washington and Massachusetts. To say I was shocked would be an understatement. The safety standards compared were not overly restrictive in nature, they were *common sense*. If we are going to make the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act (MMMA) work in Michigan, we have to get serious about standards and testing. I'm hoping that you will see the chart I am referring to during testimony.

We call it *medical* marihuana, and yet we do not even expect this product to comply with state food laws? Shame on us. Either Michigan's medical marihuana lobbyists need to take a field trip to Colorado or Connecticut and research their legislation, or Rep. Mike Callton should. Those other states made a commitment to patient safety, we should too.

In support of HB 5104

The passing of the MMMA by a significant margin in November 2008 was a victory for the medical marijuana community and patient rights, while the subsequent *People v. Carruthers* an unfortunate backdoor legislative tool that basically removed an important option for caregivers, dispensary owners and patients. Under the Act's definition of "marihuana" (which aligned with Section 7106 Public Health Code), they believed themselves able to manufacture extracts and compounds to be used as alternate methods of delivery for the active ingredients in marijuana. The fact is, this more narrow definition of "useable marijuana," exploited in the Carruthers case, has significantly impacted a segment of the medical marihuana patient community, resulting in a dramatic decrease in options for relief available to Michigan patients. Edibles and extracts.

What if a patient cannot smoke? I'm thinking of the elderly, the very sick—they are most likely in a hospital, assisted living facility, or hospice setting. Is it practical for them to smoke there? Is it *possible* for them to smoke there? What about a child whose seizures are controlled with the drug, should that child be so severely limited in options for relief? How will *these* patients, those in the *most* need of relief, be able to reap the manifold (and documented) benefits of this drug? They can't. That is what the Carruthers' decision broke, and it's up to you to fix it.

The Carruthers decision has created *great impediments* to patients using the drug effectively, took away options that are *crucial* for some patients who cannot smoke the medicine. Yes, legislate to make sure it's safe, but do not allow these options to remain unavailable to patients in Michigan for any longer.

Dismiss SB 660

SB 660 cruised through committee, was brought to a vote, and passed, in less than two weeks. I've heard it said the bill was three years in the making, but I also understand that some people recently went on an international junket to see the facility of the bill's (unofficial?) sponsor, Prairie Plant Systems (PPS). That must have been a very nice trip, I'm sure when you returned you turned to our trusty friend Google to see what our neighbors to the north think about PPS's business practices.

If you haven't had the chance to take a look, I'll let you in on a little secret. PPS is incredibly UNPOPULAR in their own country. Google their name, look at the articles. It's said they provide a questionable product but have basically cornered the market. Good for the people in Canada? The people of Canada don't think so. Will PPS do the same here, if they can? Of course they will, they are a corporation...**profit before people**.

They understand how this works, who better to spread their gospel than one of your own...you've all worked together before, I'm guessing. It's nice you still get to see each other now and then.

Did you tour the old copper mine they bought in the UP, where they plan to grow some of their product for the US market? That's where quality products are grown, right? Underground, with grow-lights instead of sunshine and recycled air and water. A nice controlled environment, no pollutants left over from the mining operation, right? I'm sure their product will be as awesome as are tomatoes when grown the same way.

Starting in 2014, Canadian medical marihuana patients will no longer be able to cultivate a few plants for their own medical care. Imagine their chagrin. But that works out pretty good for PPS, doesn't it? Americans are like Canandians (in some ways), we are fiercely independent people who want *choices*, expect choices, savvy enough to understand that the tomato bought from Krogers might keep longer, but the final product will not compare to the one lovingly cared for by a real farmer who put quality before quantity. We like options, people should get to *choose*. Somehow the people of Canada lost their right to choose.

Corporate interests should not come before *constituent* interests, and when an influential lobbyist, backed by corporate money, seeks to tip the scales in their favor (albeit a potentially long-range plan to do so), by creating a secondary system and a new classification of "pharmaceutical-grade" marihuana, all of which is dependent on the federal government's reclassification of marihuana as a Schedule II narcotic, well it makes me wonder. You set up a separate system before you refine the one you have in place? A secondary system that will not go into effect until the federal government makes a decision for the whole country. This doesn't make sense. Why now? Questions are being asked and people are watching.

We shouldn't even be talking about SB 660 until the federal government reclassifies medical marijuana, so right now it's just **garbage legislation**, taking your time and attention from the issues that matter *right now*, bills that can actually *improve* the MMMA, and have some *immediate* beneficial effects for Michigan medical marijuana patients. An alternate system to acquire strictly-controlled product is worthwhile, because it will allow those who are unable (or hesitant) to visit a provisioning center get their medication through a pharmacy, potentially allowing more patients to reap the myriad benefits of medical marihuana. SB 660 has promise but still lacks some basic patient safety measures, it's not ready.

We know that Prairie Plant Systems' interest in Michigan's governance of MMMA has little to do with the needs of the people, we know and accept their ultimate goal is profit, but should their goals take precedence over the primary objective of the MMMA, which was to create a structure and system to support the *local* cultivation and production of *safe* medical marijuana to satisfy the needs of Michigan medical marijuana patients?

I give you credit, Rep. Callton, for taking up this issue and advocating for the will of the people, legislating NOT for big business and foreign corporate interests, but for the patients, caregivers and dispensary owners who are fully invested in seeing legislation adopted to clarify issues in the MMMA definition and provide a framework for its proper implementation in this state. But you have some work to do on the patient safety issues, simple things to do with labeling and testing. Not rocket science, just science. We have to commit to sound safety standards for products acquired through the provisioning system.

As elected officials of the *people*, I hope you will choose to vote in *their* best interests. **Pass HB 5104**, fix an immediate problem, then fix the system, with a *revised HB 4271*. Dismiss SB 660 until the federal government makes a decision. And keep in mind that 63% of the voters wanted the MMMA to work.

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