

Alexandra Ford
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Testimony of Alexandra Ford
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Good morning and thank you for having me. My name is Alex Ford and I'm the executive director of Grassroots Vermont, formerly Rutland County Organics, located in the town of Brandon. We provide support to patients with ailments such as cancer, MS, and chronic pain and our demographic is primarily people over the age of 50. The products that we provide make a real difference in these patients quality of life.

I'd like to state that I agree and support with the additions that Shayne and Monique have proposed. I'd like to ask you to consider a few additional laws that seem to be a real hardship for patients.

1. First, as statute reads now, Vt medical marijuana patients can only change dispensaries once in 90 days, and must pay \$25 to change dispensaries. We would like to see this changed to 30 days.

In a perfect world, patients should have the choice to move freely among dispensaries.

We all carry different strains and products at varying prices, and we have new strains and products coming out all the time.

You and I have the right to choose which pharmacy we want to... Medical marijuana patients should have that same freedom of choice.

In fact, one of the benefits of the new delivery program is that patients can access products from any of the dispensaries, not just the one that is located closest to them. But again, they can only change dispensaries once every three months and it costs them money to change each time.

The problem is that in order for patients to move freely among the dispensaries, would need a new software system that could track patient purchases in real time. The costs would no doubt be prohibitive.

4. Physicians are not prescribing medical marijuana...they are simply validating the qualifying debilitating condition.
5. In the State of Vermont a physician can prescribe opiates to you on your very first meeting.

****The bottom line is you either have the qualifying condition or not.

There's one more thing I'd like to add. The bill as passed by the Senate requires that individuals who provide financing for a marijuana business be Vermont residents.

It is extremely difficult to raise capital in the cannabis industry. The residency requirement for financiers would create a significant hardship for us to get capital. Grassroots Vermont has relied solely on out-of-state loans to keep our business going. What price will we pay for that capital if we can only borrow from the richest Vermonters? And will capital even be available to us?

We also believe the residency provisions in S. 241 are unconstitutional. You have received a memorandum from our attorney John Hollar that describes in some detail why the courts have not allowed states to discriminate between in-state and out-of-state residents.

Advertising: It doesn't make any sense to allow advertising for adult use but not for medical. I should think we would want that flow of information regarding the medical benefits of cannabis.