

ROBERT T. STEPHAN
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LENEXA, KANSAS 66215

Dear Fellow Kansan –

I'm writing to ask for your support on an issue that is important to all of us: The right for physicians to recommend and patients to use medical marijuana.

I understand that few topics are as clouded in controversy as this one. But as both a cancer survivor and former law enforcement official, I believe I bring a unique perspective to this debate. Let me share with you some of what I've learned:

- Tens of thousands of law-abiding Americans are using medical marijuana for relief from the debilitating effects of chronic pain, cancer, chemotherapy, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, glaucoma and other serious illnesses and afflictions. For many patients, medical marijuana is a choice of last resort and the *only medication that works*.
- Numerous professional medical organizations support the use of medical marijuana. Among these are the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Public Health Association and the American Nurses Association. The influential *New England Journal of Medicine* also has editorialized in favor of patient access to marijuana.
- Twelve states, which collectively make up about 22 percent of the U.S. population, have already enacted laws that allow the use of cannabis for medical purposes.
- There is no evidence to support the argument that state medical marijuana laws lead to increased use of marijuana and other drugs, according to an in-depth study released in 1999 by the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine.
- A nationwide Gallup Poll conducted in 1999 found that 73 percent of American adults favor "making marijuana legally available for doctors to prescribe in order to reduce pain and suffering."

Today in Kansas, the possession of any amount of marijuana for whatever purpose is punishable by up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$2,500. A second conviction is a felony and can result in 42 months in jail and a fine of up to \$100,000. Cultivation of five or more marijuana plants, even for medical purposes, is a felony punishable by 11 to 17 years in prison.

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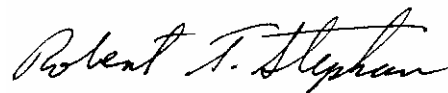
Let me make clear that I am in no way advocating drug legalization. But I also do not believe that the state should preempt the role of the physician when it comes to deciding what's best for ill Kansans. That's why I support changing state law to ensure that individuals can obtain and use a limited amount of marijuana if recommended by their physician -- without fear of prosecution.

I am convinced that we have a moral and ethical responsibility to protect law-abiding citizens from the risk and trauma of arrest, prosecution, conviction and prison simply because they're attempting to gain relief from a serious physical condition.

Please join with me in voicing your support for legalized medical marijuana use in Kansas by returning the enclosed reply card to the Kansas Compassionate Care Coalition.

Together, we can prevail upon our elected representatives to enact compassionate safeguards that will protect our fellow citizens, family and friends in their hour of need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert T. Stephan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'R'.

Robert T. Stephan
Legal Consultant
Kansas Compassionate Care Coalition