

November 17, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Ranking Member Leahy, Chairman Frelinghuysen, and Ranking Member Lowey:

On behalf of the epilepsy community, we, the undersigned organizations collectively representing 3.4 million Americans living with epilepsy and seizure disorders, urge you to protect state medical cannabis and cannabidiol (CBD) programs through language in appropriations bills. The Senate FY 2018 Commerce, Justice and Science appropriations bill includes a provision that prohibits the Department of Justice from using funds to prevent states from "implementing their own state laws that authorize the use, distribution, possession or cultivation of medical marijuana," and we encourage you to ensure this language is enacted, as it has been in past years. This is a priority for many in the epilepsy community, especially the more than a million individuals living with epilepsy who do not have seizure control even with currently available FDA-approved therapies.

Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy at some point in their lifetime. Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. There is no "one size fits all" treatment for epilepsy, and more than one third of people living with epilepsy suffer from drug-resistant or intractable seizures. Many more live with significant side-effects, despite available treatments. This is why some people living with uncontrolled seizures turn to medical cannabis and/or CBD when other options have failed.

We are committed to supporting physician-directed care and to exploring and advocating for all potential treatment options for epilepsy, including medical cannabis and CBD. People with uncontrolled seizures live with the continual risk of serious injuries and loss of life. If a patient and their health care providers feel that the potential benefits of medical cannabis and CBD outweigh the risks, then families need to have that legal option. Currently, the majority of states have enacted laws to authorize state-run medical cannabis or CBD programs. In states where medical use of cannabis and/or CBD is legal as a treatment option for epilepsy, a number of people living with epilepsy report beneficial effects, including a decrease in seizure activity.

We urge you to help ensure safe and reliable access to medical cannabis and CBD through protection of the state-regulated programs, which were established pursuant to state laws. Please

do not hesitate to contact Angela Ostrom, Epilepsy Foundation Chief Legal Officer and Vice President Public Policy at our national office at 301-918-3766 or aostrom@efa.org with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Bridge the Gap - SYNGAP ERF
Child Neurology Foundation
Danny Did Foundation
Dup15q Alliance
Epilepsy Foundation
FACES - Finding A Cure for Epilepsy & Seizures
Hope for Hypothalamic Hamartoma
LGS Foundation
Realm of Caring Foundation
Ring14 USA
Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance
Wishes for Elliott: Advancing SCN8A Research