



January 22, 2018

The Honorable Michael Young  
200 W. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Chair Young and Members of the Corrections and Criminal Law Committee:

On behalf of the Epilepsy Foundation and our local affiliate, Epilepsy Foundation of Indiana, we urge you to support Senate Bill 294, which would improve access to cannabidiol (CBD) for individuals living with intractable epilepsy. This bill would authorize retailers to possess and sell CBD to individuals on the cannabidiol registry. This program would be regulated by the Department of Health.

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of the at least 3.4 million Americans with epilepsy and seizures. We foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy, and direct services. Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy at some point in their lifetime. There is no "one size fits all" treatment for epilepsy, and about a third of people living with epilepsy suffer from uncontrolled or intractable seizures, with many more living with significant side-effects, despite available treatments. Uncontrolled seizures can lead to disability, injury, and even death. This is why people living with uncontrolled seizures turn to medical cannabis when other options have failed.

The Epilepsy Foundation is committed to supporting physician-directed care, and to exploring and advocating for all potential treatment options for epilepsy, including cannabidiol (CBD) and medical cannabis. People with uncontrolled seizures live with the continual risk of serious injuries and loss of life. If a patient and their health care professionals feel that the potential benefits of medical cannabis for uncontrolled epilepsy outweigh the risks, then families need to have that legal option. Nothing should stand in the way of patients gaining access to this potentially lifesaving treatment.

Currently, the medical use of cannabis or CBD is legal per state law in the majority of states, including Indiana. In these states, a number of people living with epilepsy report beneficial effects, including a decrease in seizure activity, when using a cannabis strain rich in cannabidiol. The state can play a critical role in ensuring that access to medical CBD is safe and reliable. Supporting Senate Bill 294 to create a safe and comprehensive medical CBD point-of-sale structure will allow individuals to legally purchase this potential treatment option. Not everyone with epilepsy should or would consider medical cannabis or CBD as a treatment option, and further research is needed, but medical cannabis and CBD, when prescribed by a treating

physician, may be the best alternative for some individuals living with drug resistant epilepsy and uncontrolled seizures. Legal access to cannabis will support increased research efforts and allow individuals who have failed to gain seizure control on all existing therapies an option for treatment.

The Epilepsy Foundation urges you to support Senate Bill 294, which would improve access to cannabidiol (CBD) for individuals living with intractable epilepsy. Please do not hesitate to contact Angela Ostrom, Chief Legal Officer & Vice President Public Policy, at 301-918-3766 or [aostrom@efa.org](mailto:aostrom@efa.org) with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip M. Gattone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Philip M. Gattone, M.Ed.  
President & CEO  
Epilepsy Foundation

Ryan Keys  
Executive Director  
Epilepsy Foundation of Indiana