

February 2, 2018

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Representative Cliff Rosenberger
Speaker of the House
The Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High Street, 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee

Dear Speaker Rosenberger:

First, let me thank you for your appointment as patient representative to Ohio's Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee (the "MMAC"). I am honored to have been chosen to represent the community that Ohio's medical marijuana law, House Bill 523 ("HB 523"), was designed to serve. The citizens of Ohio have long fought for access to this medicine, and HB 523 was a monumental step in the right direction.

That said, after thoughtful deliberation and soul-searching, I regret to inform you that I must resign from my position as patient representative to the MMAC. I have considered the question with my family for many months now, and I have voiced my concerns to my fellow MMAC members. While it has been a labor of love in serving with my fellow members, I respectfully must say that the MMAC has proven not to have had the meaningful impact on the implementation of HB 523 I had hoped for or anticipated.

As I am sure you recall, the House version of HB 523 called for a strong medical marijuana control commission to administer the program. However, the resulting body subsequently was relegated to an advisory committee. Unfortunately, this lack of any real authority has been compounded by an absence of opportunity for significant dialogue during MMAC meetings and no working group sessions amongst committee members. For most of the MMAC meetings to date, committee members have not been provided any of the meeting materials in advance for serious contemplation and review. The end result is that this strong group of interdisciplinary experts has been left with a forum that is ill-equipped to consider, discuss, and develop substantive policy recommendations for presentation to the regulators. My fear is that, in the absence of a strong commission of the type originally contemplated by HB 523, the Ohio program is headed the way of New York and Illinois, programs debilitated by bureaucracy that have failed to provide adequate patient access and physician participation.

Although stepping away from the MMAC, I do not intend to discontinue my efforts to advocate for Ohio patients, and its citizenry at large, to help ensure our great state continues to make progress in instituting sensible cannabis policy that provides appropriate access to these therapies. We need to continue to be proactive in crippling the illicit markets for marijuana and to address the underlying social justice issues at play. I intend to continue to make positive contributions in these areas after my departure from the MMAC. I will remain at your disposal, and that of the MMAC and regulators, to assist in any way I can. Again, I thank you, and the patients of Ohio, for the opportunity to be of service.

Respectfully,



James "Ted" Bibart, Esq.