



May 13, 2015

The Honorable Cory Gardner
B40B Dirksen Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Gardner and Wyden;

On behalf of the Epilepsy Foundation, I thank you for introducing the *Therapeutic Hemp Medical Access Act of 2015*, which would remove therapeutic hemp from the Controlled Substances Act so that Americans living with epilepsy and uncontrolled seizures can gain access to this treatment option.

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of more than 2.8 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.

The Epilepsy Foundation is committed to supporting physician directed care and to exploring and advocating for all potential treatment options for epilepsy, because there is no "one size fits all" treatment. About a third of people living with epilepsy suffer from uncontrolled or intractable seizures despite available treatments. People living with epilepsy have reported beneficial effects, including a decrease in seizure activity, when using cannabis, especially strains rich in cannabidiol (CBD) and low in THC. If a patient and their healthcare 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 potential lifesaving treatment.

Removing therapeutic hemp, defined as cannabis with less than .3% THC, from the Controlled Substances Act would allow people living with epilepsy and uncontrolled seizures legal access to this treatment option. We further support rescheduling the whole cannabis plant to improve access for research into the connection between cannabis, including the component CBD, and seizure control, so families considering cannabis and CBD as a treatment option can make informed decisions. Not everyone with epilepsy should or would consider cannabis as a treatment option, and further research is needed on the connection between cannabis and seizures. But cannabis and the component CBD, when recommended by a treating physician, may be the best alternative for some individuals living with drug resistant epilepsy and uncontrolled seizures. Rescheduling cannabis would lift federal barriers to research to help us achieve a more holistic view of this potential treatment option.

We thank you for introducing the *Therapeutic Hemp Medical Access Act of 2015* in the Senate to remove therapeutic hemp from the Controlled Substances Act so that Americans living with epilepsy and uncontrolled seizures can gain access to this treatment option. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Angela Ostrom, Chief Operating Officer & Vice President Public Policy at the Epilepsy Foundation, at 301-918-3766 or aostrom@efa.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip M. Gattone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "P" and "G".

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