

TESTIMONY OF JOSEPH MIRT
BEFORE THE PENNSYLVANIA SENATE
COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE
ON SB 1182 THE GOVERNOR RAYMOND SHAFER COMPASSIONATE USE OF
MEDICAL CANNABIS ACT

Good Morning Chairmen McIlhinney & Ferlo and members of the committee.

My name is Joseph Mirt, I am a resident of the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County.

I am 29 years old and own a home here in Pittsburgh and do not plan on relocating. Ever. I have started a business from the ground up over 4 years ago that is ready to expand to a bigger facility, get more up-to-date equipment and hire roughly half a dozen people or so within in the next 2 years.

I should have mentioned I am an Iraq war veteran, I served with the C. Co. 1/103 Eng Bn out of Philadelphia, PA in the North Iraq area known as Baiji. My main purpose initially was as a construction equipment operator, until some guys got hurt, people started going on leave, etc. My personal job goals shifted into that of a Combat Engineer. Our units main objective was Route Clearance. On my first day on mission after the switch, we were roadside bombed by a daisy chain of White Phosphorous rounds, luckily the up armor prevented any of from being killed. That was my wake up call. That was the sign that it was life or death. I had to either accept it or go mad. So like the rest of the troops I accepted that cold fact. I must admit that alone is the feeling I cant shake. After serving out the rest of my time in the PA Army National Guard (regular unit B. Co. 876th Eng Bn ouf of Washington County) I decided opening a business was the only way I would feel in control again.

A few years later and the business is successful, as in i have employees and i am making enough to keep the lights on, pay the employees, and pay all necessary taxes. Life is good! Bad economy be damned! If you work hard enough, it will work out for you!! Clearly! But life wasnt really sweet, I have some issues that I havent dealt with properly since I've been home and am now working on them.

Unfortunately it might be too little too late, as i was recently diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. This diagnosis was originally a huge blow to my ego and i felt that i wouldnt be able to get out of bed again. Unbearable pain coupled with electrical pulses coursing through my body head to toe made those thoughts seem

like the very real option. But after some research I found that living with MS is possible, just tricky to plan for and I will be in levels of discomfort most of the time.

It was while in the the hospital for my first MS Attack that I saw a program on the Medical Marijuana Act in PA. The programs focus was on the Charlottes Web Strain for the little girl with epilepsy that this High CBD enriched strain is making leaps and bounds in not only her recovery, but her normalization of life. They made mention of programs involving working with MS patients and that some strains enriched with CBD could be beneficial to patients during an MS Attack and possibly even help rebuild the destruction the disease has caused. It is very unfortunate that not more research can be done because of its "legality" issue.

After I got home from the hospital I did some research and found that "blueberry" strains have naturally high levels of CBD in comparison to other strains. So I went on a mission to find "blueberries." Found em. Smoked em. I felt relief almost instantly. I hadn't been able to hardly move without a blinding headache, and this is with taking the prescribed dosage of "medication" from the Dr. Well, After a few hits of the Blueberry strain. the headaches subsided, my vision started to calm down and i began to feel as if I could get out of bed and walk around. And so I did. So I spent the next few days smoking a high CBD strain and doing yoga and meditating. Overall it was a wonderful experience and one that helped me bounce back from the original MS attack i thought was going to cripple me.

So in summation, I am a lifelong PA resident, Taxpayer, Business Owner / Employer, and PA Army National Guard Veteran of Foreign War, AND MS sufferer. I am currently on medication that I take once a week via a self administered shot in my thigh but am seeking a more fulfilling life, seeking a better quality of life. Part of that for me is being able to choose the health care that best fits my needs. I think i speak for so many people when i say that the issue of Marijuana's medical benefits Vs. its negatives is beginning to run its course. If studies were allowed to be conducted we could find even more secret benefits from this wonderful PLANT.

I dont need help babysitting myself and i would like the right to choose my own plan of health care and i dont want the government telling me what type of treatment is right for me. Especially with a disease such as MS where there is no main root or set treatment that works for everyone . So it truly is up to the individual.

Thank You,
Joseph Mirt
SPC
PAARNG
304 Copperfield Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA

15210

412.519.8500