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Chairman Rulli, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member DeMora, and members of the General Government Committee. Thank you for allowing my proponent testimony today for Senate Bill 9 of the 135th General Assembly, which would amend the law related to medical marijuana.

I want to thank Vice Chair Schuring for sponsoring this much-needed piece of legislation.

My name is Mary Alleger and I am an Ohio medical marijuana patient. I am also a mother, and a student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, where I am to graduate with a Master of Science degree in Medical Cannabis Science and Therapeutics this coming May. Part of my education is studying the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of cannabinoids, as well as how cannabis can help somatic and neurological conditions. I have also worked in a couple of Ohio medical marijuana dispensaries and have been an advocate for medical cannabis for over a decade.

Working in the dispensaries, I saw many patients who benefited from medical marijuana. These benefits extend beyond their qualifying condition. I met patients who had a card for Crohn's Disease but also found a topical to use for their migraines. I have had patients with Glaucoma find benefits for their arthritis. I have met dozens who have gotten clean off of opiates with medical marijuana for chronic pain and live a more fulfilling life. I, myself, hold 15 years clean from stimulants from using medical marijuana. The benefits of medical marijuana reach beyond what our law currently allows.

Senate Bill 9 would create the necessary change to the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program by adding qualifying conditions to the list, as well as "any condition not specified in this division that a recommending physician is qualified to treat and considers, in the physician's sole discretion and medical opinion, as debilitating to the patient as the conditions listed" (Senate Bill 9, As Introduced by the 135th General Assembly of Ohio). This would allow the patient and their doctor to decide if medical marijuana is right for them. Any medical treatment should only ever concern the doctor and their patient. Because the Board of Pharmacy continues to reject research and data presented to them year after year, we need the legislation to step in. However, we recognize that the legislation as a whole probably does not have a background in medicine. Therefore, the reasonable solution to this issue would be to allow the doctor to decide if medical marijuana is appropriate for their patient. Any other medicine would be a discussion between patient and doctor - medical marijuana should be treated the same if it is truly viewed as a medicine.

Additionally, when it comes to using medical marijuana for any condition, it is not the condition you are treating – you are treating the symptoms. For example, I qualify for a medical marijuana card because I have PTSD. No amount of marijuana can make my PTSD go away. However, I do use medical marijuana to treat my PTSD symptoms. I mainly have issues managing anxiety and sensory overload. I am legally allowed to use medical marijuana to help with my anxiety and sensory overload symptoms because my diagnosis label is PTSD. There are thousands of Ohioans who suffer from generalized anxiety disorder who currently are not legally allowed to help their anxiety issues with medical cannabis - all because they do not have the right label. I find this to be hypocritical and morally wrong. Anxiety is a symptom of many conditions, and if the state allows one person to treat their anxiety with medical cannabis, then everyone else should be allowed to.

I urge you to support and vote for Senate Bill 9 for the betterment of our state program and increase access to those in need.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter. I am happy to take any questions you may have.