

Good Afternoon, Chairman Rulli, Vice Chairman Schuring, Ranking Member DeMora and members of the Senate General Government Committee. My name is Jason Berger and I'm a 51 year old disabled/retired police officer from the Independence Police Department just south of Cleveland.

After my second shooting I came back to work a twelve-hour night shift just three days later. At 6:10 a.m. that morning, I had the first of many grand mal seizures and was rushed to a local hospital. I was then life-flighted to the Cleveland Clinic and remained there for a week before they were able to arrive at the proper diagnosis as I didn't fit the traditional profile for the disease that rendered me so highly immunocompromised. I was diagnosed with Primary Central Nervous System Lymphoma (PCNSL), which is a very rare form of brain cancer. It's so rare that it makes up less than 4% of all brain lymphomas worldwide.

As a result, I was given two years to live, but this past September marked 18 years that I have lived with the disease. Currently, I'm recovering from a stem cell transplant to treat my fifth relapse of this rare form of brain cancer. It generally starts in the eyes and moves to the brain, but mine started in my brain and moved to my eyes. Unfortunately, I'm now blind in my left eye.

I was 34, newly married, looking forward to starting a family, and was just hired on at the Independence Police Department. I had been recognized by the county and the state when I was awarded the "Silver and Gold" Award for going above and beyond the call of duty. I was a successful police officer, but without warning, my entire life was unexpectedly changed forever.

I've always been competitive and played many sports but baseball was my strongest. When I was hired in 1998 by the Valley View Police Department, I received a phone call from a sergeant with the Independence Police Department and was one of the few officers in the state to be hand selected to play on a police travel softball team, The Ohio Lawmen. We traveled all across the country to compete in tournaments that raised money for the families of fallen officers.

We were very competitive, winning one silver and two gold medals in the Police and Fire Olympics. I am the only police officer to ever compete in the Police and Fire Olympics for Valley View Police Department, let alone win a medal. At that time, I had above average hand-eye coordination and better than 20/20 vision. Due to the brain cancer damaging my optic nerve, however, I'm now completely blind in my left eye and I'm color blind in my right eye, in addition to having low-light vision issues.

My quality of life has been greatly diminished, but after 18 years, I'm still alive and I'm active in my community. I coach wrestling and will be running for Village Council in the next election in the Village of Brooklyn Heights where I've lived for the last 22 years.

After my first two bouts with cancer, I had the maximum dose of chemotherapy and every muscle and joint in my body would ache in pain for days on end. Only after I learned at the Cleveland School of Cannabis about the history of cannabis and how we've been lied to about how beneficial it is, along with how Israel, Spain, and Italy are leading the world in cannabis related cancer research, did I find out about Rick Simpson oil (RSO), also known as Full Extract Cannabis Oil (FECO), and its benefits for cancer patients. Not only for symptoms, but actually killing cancer cells! Especially brain cancers!!

At first, I had to go back to my old neighborhood and ask the kids that I grew up with that are all in and out of jail to see if I could get some "raw material" to make my own RSO/FECO. I had no idea if what I made was poisonous, but I was desperate and in pain, so I started taking the oil. I was pleasantly

surprised after going through chemotherapy and radiation for my third PCNSL relapse that I had zero negative side effects! As if I had no treatment at all! Most importantly, I had no pain!!

I became a student ambassador for the Cleveland School of Cannabis. I've spoken publicly on this incredible plant five times now and I've vowed that once my immune system is stronger, I'm going to be very active in increasing access to it in Ohio and coast to coast. I'm not saying it's the magic bullet, but I do believe that it's a huge part of my pain relief and longevity!

It's my opinion that in over 80 years, Ohio is still stuck in the dark ages and future generations will be scratching their heads asking what the heck were we thinking? High prices, long travel times, and lack of available products are the main three issues most patients I've spoken with are concerned about. The current program is lacking what this country was built on – the free market. More competition will make prices more reasonable and create better access for patients. It's common sense to me that if there are more resources available for patients to access medication, at a reasonable price, they will not have to go to Michigan or the black market to get relief for their pain.

As I've said, I used to be a police officer to serve. Now I coach to serve and to teach kids how to wrestle and play baseball. I'm now here to serve Ohio's medical marijuana patients who need access to quality products and dispensaries that are well stocked and close to those in need.

Simply put, I support SB 9. Thank you for your time and please consider voting for this very important bill that will make the lives of many disabled and suffering Ohio citizens a little better.