

Good Morning Chair Lipps, Vice-Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the Ohio House of Representatives Health Committee.

My name is Fran Wilson, I'm from Akron, Ohio.

I am here as a neighbor— someone who cares deeply about our Ohio community and elevating its wellbeing.

I'm here today as an ally of the neurodivergent community, a friend of many on the spectrum, and an advocate for breaking the stigmas around cannabis and minority communities.

The issue of allowing medical cannabis treatment for those on the Autism Spectrum is, at its core, about access.

Access is fundamental to the model and tradition of medical care. And often in our medical-legal history, nothing is more divisive and yet more empowering than the freedom of access to care.

And what a time to be talking about access to care— in the midst of a pandemic that has turned our world upside down and reinvigorated our perspectives of wellbeing and medicine.

This is a time to trust our medical professionals and to look to today's scientific and political bellwethers in order to open medical cannabis treatment to a community that is asking this legislative body for broader options.

Cannabis has a tradition of stigma, and so does the neurodivergent community. Indeed, their respective histories are coated in layers and layers of misunderstanding and uncomfortability.

That means that there is so much room for growth and bridge-building, sharing information and finding common ground.

Today, I hope we can find that common ground, and elevate wellness and access in our legislative approach to this issue.

While I am not a doctor and not on the spectrum myself. I came here to be a good neighbor: to speak on behalf of and in community with a population of Ohioans that needs an open ear and legislative support.

I further testify a truth of the neurodivergent community— that this issue of care and of accessibility is at the very heart of what it means to be a family— to nurture those we love and support those we want to succeed.

Let's be good neighbors to our Autistic and neurodiverse Ohio communities.

*HB60 Witness*

*March 2021*

*Fran Wilson*

I respectfully ask y'all to push forward with HB60— to amend the respective Revised Code to authorize the use of medical cannabis for Autism Spectrum Disorder.

And isn't it funny how adding just 3 words into our policy— *Autism Spectrum Disorder*—can elevate recognition for and help to improve the lives of so many Ohioans?

I close my statement today by elevating HB60 Sponsors Representative Juanita Brent and Representative Bill Seitz— as well as Co-Sponsors, including those on this committee: Chair Lipps, Representative Terence Upchurch, Representative Tom Young.

Thank you.

*Paul Francis Wilson*