

Rep. Luria Testimony for Judiciary Member Day 9/20

Thank you, Chairman Nadler, Ranking Member Collins, and to my colleagues on the committee for giving me this opportunity.

As the mother of a 10-year-old daughter, I can tell you there is nothing worse than watching your child in pain. We all want what's best for our children and I trust that the members of this committee share my concern for children suffering from rare or debilitating diseases.

The unfortunate reality is that our outdated marijuana laws cause chronically ill children to suffer from unbearable bouts of pain every day. Your committee can spare these children from unthinkable agony.

That is why I am here today to encourage the Judiciary Committee to act quickly to advance legislation to remove marijuana from the Controlled Substances Act. It defies logic, science, and compassion that marijuana is classified as a Schedule 1 drug alongside heroin.

As a mother, I will not stand on the sidelines while our outdated marijuana laws cause an undue hardship on children and families. That is why I am here today to make sure my colleagues hear the impact of inaction on reforming our marijuana laws.

Madison is a 10-year-old girl from Hampton, Virginia. When she was just 5 years old, Madison was diagnosed with a rare form of brain cancer. Only 200 adults and children are diagnosed with this form of cancer every year and the 10-year survival rate is only 20 percent.

Over the last four years, Madison has had multiple major surgeries, severe bouts of pain, and difficult treatments.

After numerous treatments, Madison's family began to experiment with cannabis products to make life more bearable for Madison. Thankfully, it worked! Madison is now able to go to school, play with friends, and do things that most 10-year-old girls do.

I would love to say that this is the end and that everybody lived happily ever after. But that is not the case. Our archaic medicinal marijuana policies prevent Madison from receiving her treatment on a legal basis.

Since cannabis is a Schedule I drug, Madison's mother could be arrested, have her property seized, or lose her daughter to child protective services. By doing what is best for her daughter, Madison's mother is risking everything. But she is doing exactly what any mother would do if their child was in pain.

Today, I ask you: Aren't we better than this? Why can't Congress stand up for children like Madison?

Our marijuana laws are not only out of step with the scientific community, they are also out of step with the American people we were sent here to represent. According to a recent poll, 93 percent of Americans support medical marijuana.

Children like Madison with rare diseases do not have time on their side. I urge the committee to act quickly to advance legislation that de-schedules marijuana so that we can stand up for children like Madison in our communities.