

## Public Hearing for Bill LD 764 March 27, 2017

Hi. My name is Garry Godfrey. I was born with alphorts syndrome. I am currently a Maine medical marijuana patient. I will start by telling you a little bit about myself.

I am a loving father of 2 wonderful boys. I am also a loving husband of 9 years to my wife Hailcy, who has been by my side throughout this long battle. I am a music lover who is very involved in the local music scene. I also dedicate a lot of my time to suicide prevention as I know how it can affect your life. Now, I would like to tell you my story.

In 2003, I was put on the list for a kidney transplant at the Maine Transplant Program in Portland, Maine. At the time I was placed on the transplant list, doctors knew I used marijuana as a medicine and were ok with that. For nearly 10 years, I traveled to Portland for every 6 months to remain on the list for a kidney. Everything was going great. I was moving up the regional kidney list.

In 2009, I started dialysis, which placed me on the national transplant list, and the regional transplant list, which I had been on for 6 years.

In 2012, I became a Maine medical marijuana patient. Shortly after I became a patient, I was informed that I was no longer eligible for a kidney transplant due to my marijuana use. I was also informed if I quit using marijuana, and was clean for 1 year, I could be placed back on the list. However, I would lose the time I had already waited, and would be placed at the bottom of the list. This news forever changed my life.

I became addicted to prescription pills, I tried to commit suicide, and went into a very deep depression. I had only 2 choices. Either stop my marijuana use and become very ill until I received a transplant, or, remain on dialysis until I died.

As I saw it, I only had 1 choice. Marijuana made it possible for me to function daily and take care of my family. I should never have to choose between a lifesaving organ transplant, or a lifesaving medicine. I hope no one ever has to feel the pain or disappointment I have felt.

I am standing here today to ask you to change this. **No one should have to make the decision I did.** As it stands, I may never see my name on the transplant list in time to receive a kidney. But hopefully, my story will open your minds and hearts, and prevent this from happening to another Maine citizen.

A medical marijuana patient's life is just as valuable as yours. I just want to remind you, I am someone's son, brother, father, uncle, and husband. My life does matter.

Thank you for your time,

Garry Godfrey