



The Senate of The State of Texas

Senator José Menéndez

District 26

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Senator Menéndez Files SB 269, a Comprehensive Medical Cannabis Bill

AUSTIN, TX — Today, Senator José Menéndez filed Senate Bill 269 to ensure patients have access to the medicine they need and deserve. The proposed legislation would increase the number of debilitating medical conditions that qualify for the Texas Compassionate Use Program (T.CUP). It would allow patients to access medical cannabis under strict consultation and recommendation from their doctor.

"Doctors, not politicians, should be determining what is best for Texas patients," said Senator Menéndez. "This is legitimate medicine that can help a variety of sick people, from the grandmother suffering from cancer to the veteran coping with PTSD after returning home from war."

Current laws only cover patients suffering from intractable epilepsy and only permit access to specific types of medical cannabis, which have been found to be ineffective for some patients. The state would continue to monitor, enforce, and regulate the program under the Department of Public Safety.

"My son Miles would qualify under the T.CUP program. However, it's not an effective treatment for his disease because he needs stronger and more reliable medicine than what is allowed," said Debbie Tolany. "I support Senator Menéndez's bill because my son doesn't deserve to suffer. He needs medical cannabis."

Texas is home to 1.7 million veterans who are left out of the current program. After years of sacrifice and valor, the state needs to honor our nation's heroes by granting them access to medicine that would treat PTSD, TBI, and other wounds of war.

"Psychotropic and opiate based drugs have lasting and dangerous side effects for many veterans," said Kate Cochran-Morgan, retired Hospital Corpsman Fleet Marine Force 3rd Class, Petty Officer. "As a service member in the United States Military, I fought for our country's freedoms. I support Senate Bill 269 because my fellow veterans and I should have the freedom to use medical cannabis to treat the diseases that still haunt us."

Medical cannabis has proven to be a safer and more effective drug than many prescription painkillers currently offered. Texas could see a reduction in prescription drug abuse by allowing alternative medicine.

"Doctors should be able to recommend cannabis to their patients if they think it will help alleviate their suffering," said Amanda Berard, a retired Army medic and current nurse in San Antonio. "This is especially true with regard to treating chronic and severe pain. We are facing an opiate epidemic in terms of addiction and overdose death. In fact, states that allow access to medical cannabis for treating chronic pain have seen significant decreases in opiate overdose deaths."

"Compassion should not be exclusive. Twenty-eight states have recognized the medical benefit of cannabis, including conservative states like Arkansas, Montana, and North Dakota," Senator Menéndez concluded. "It is time Texas steps up to the plate on behalf of our sickest patients. Senate Bill 269 will provide real relief for those who need it most."

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State Senator José Menéndez is Vice-Chair of the Senate Hispanic Caucus and represents Senate District 26 in San Antonio, Texas. He currently is a member of the Senate Committees on Higher Education, Criminal Justice, and Intergovernmental Relations. Last session, Senator Menéndez filed the first comprehensive medical cannabis legislation in the history of Texas, Senate Bill 1839. He was also the co-author of the landmark Senate Bill 339 which allowed for limited cannabis use for people with intractable epilepsy.