



SENATOR JOSÉ MENÉNDEZ DISTRICT 26

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Senator Menéndez Issues Bill to Give Texas Veterans, Cancer Patients and Others With Debilitating Conditions Access to Medical Cannabis

Austin, Texas – State Senator José Menéndez has filed Senate Bill 79 to help alleviate the suffering of Texans struggling with certain debilitating conditions. This is neither a partisan maneuver nor a new concept. Currently, 29 states allow the use of medical cannabis. Both Texas Republicans and Democrats have called upon lawmakers to let doctors determine the appropriate use of cannabis to treat their patients.

“We’re at a tipping point in this country where chronic conditions from cancer to autism touch all of our families,” Senator Menéndez said. “Unfortunately, many pharmaceuticals don’t help patients and can put them at risk for deadly addictions. Meanwhile, the number of medical institutions, doctors, politicians (Republicans & Democrats) and the vast majority of Americans who support the use of medicinal cannabis has continued to grow. What is Texas waiting for? Let us expand the scope of our state’s compassion to help those who are suffering now.”

Our state’s *Compassionate Access Program* already allows medical cannabis to be used, but only for those with intractable epilepsy. Currently, veterans who served our country and now suffer from PTSD, traumatic brain injuries and other wounds of war are unable to have access to a treatment that is proven to be effective in treating pain, nausea, appetite loss and anxiety. Medical cannabis is also shown to alleviate symptoms associated with cancer, Lou Gehrig’s Disease (ALS), autism, Crohn’s disease, and other conditions.

The medical community has long recognized the benefits of medicinal cannabis and the Texas Medical Association supports the physician’s right to include this option for treating patients. Additionally, a survey by the *New England Journal of Medicine* showed that the vast majority of doctors, 76% percent, approve of the use of medicinal cannabis. That mirrors the percentage of Texas voters who believe that seriously ill patients should be allowed to use medical cannabis, according to a poll by the University of Texas and the Texas Tribune.

Our nation is facing an epidemic of opioid addiction, largely driven by the misuse of prescription painkillers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, deaths involving overdose of prescription opioids have quadrupled since 1999, the same growth rate as the sale of these prescription drugs. Between 1999 to 2015, more than 183,000 people died in the U.S. from overdoses related to prescription opioids. Medical marijuana provides a safer, effective alternative that may help prevent these needless deaths.

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