

# Senate Health and Human Services Committee

*Kirsten Koch 271-3266*

**HB 89-FN**, adding qualifying medical conditions to the therapeutic use of cannabis law.

**Hearing Date:** April 21, 2021

**Time Opened:** 8:34 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 8:46 a.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Bradley, Gray, Avard, Sherman and Whitley

**Members of the Committee Absent :** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill adds moderate to severe insomnia and autism spectrum disorder to the definition of "qualifying medical condition" for the purposes of the use of cannabis for therapeutic purposes law.

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## **Sponsors:**

Rep. Vail

Rep. Chase

Rep. Laflamme

Rep. Abramson

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**Who supports the bill:** Rep. Jerry Knirk, TCMOB; Rep. Suzanne Vail, Hillsborough 30; Rep. Larry Laflamme, Coos 3; Joshua Beecher; Michael McLaughlin, Sanctuary ATC; Elizabeth Fenner-Lukaitis; David Bates; Sara Johnson; Wendy Chase; Matthew Simon, Marijuana Policy Project; Elliot Axelman; Robin Vogt; Teresa Rosenberger, Temescal Wellness; Keenan Blaum, Prime ATC.

**Who opposes the bill:** None

**Who is neutral on the bill:** Michael Holt, DHHS

## **Summary of Testimony Presented:**

### **Representative Suzanne Vail, Hillsborough 30**

- Rep. Vail said, this bill adds moderate to severe insomnia and autism spectrum disorder to the definition of "qualifying medical condition" for the purposes of the use of cannabis for therapeutic purposes law.
- Rep. Vail said, insomnia was approved by the therapeutic cannabis program last year, but the bill never made it to the Senate because of the pandemic.
- Rep. Vail said, Rep. Jerry Knirk is best equipped to answer any questions and he will later testify
- Rep. Vail said, insomnia causes physical stress, nightmares, exasperates other illnesses, and affects 10-30% of the population. Right now, we can assume there are more cases than ever due to stress from the pandemic.

- Rep. Vail said, traditionally sleep medicine can be habit forming, decrease awareness, and does not provide relief from the side effects. Patients cannot drive the next day after the use of certain sleep aids.
- Rep. Vail said, cannabis products have no lingering side effects. CBD has no psychoactive component. Cannabis helps those with sleep problems and nightmares. It also helps those with PTSD. Those who can fall asleep and stay asleep have a better quality of life. Cannabis products are controlled, tested, and packed in special containers. People should not be forced to the streets to treat their symptoms with unknown compounds.

### **Representative Jerry Knirk, Carroll 3 and the Therapeutic Cannabis Medical Oversight Board (TCMOB)**

- Rep. Knirk testified in support of the bill.
- Rep. Knirk said he is the chair of therapeutic cannabis medical oversight board (TCMOB).
- Rep. Knirk said, the TCMOB considers each qualifying condition based on studies.
- Rep. Knirk said, many current available treatments are limited by side effects or habit-forming prescription reliability. Current available treatments have increased risks. Cannabis is not without any risks and does have side effects as well, but many studies show THC and CBD are proven to help individuals sleep. Some medications used for insomnia can really mess up your sleep architecture. Insomnia can be associated with many other conditions. It is classified as a symptom of other conditions rather than a stand-alone symptom.
- Rep. Knirk said, HB 89 was amended in the House HHS Committee to add autism spectrum disorder, because of the work done last year on SB 700. That bill never made it through the process again.
- Rep. Knirk said, Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a standalone condition. ASD can be difficult to manage with current pharmaceutical options. Studies support cannabis as a reasonable option to treat ASD. Testimony provided to us in the House provided compelling anecdotal evidence for cannabis treating ASD. However, there are significant risks in using cannabis in developing brains and almost no studies on the use of cannabis on ASD brains. We need studies for cannabis use for ages under 21 and for the use of cannabis in brains with ASD.