

### **Declaration of Ashley Bennett**

I, Ashley Bennett, hereby state that the facts set forth below are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief. Further, I understand that the statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities).

1. I am 33 years old and live in Lebanon, Pennsylvania.
2. I have two sons, a seven-year-old and an eight-year-old.
3. Because of my disabilities, I have struggled to work, but I recently started a new job at a warehouse soon, doing packaging.
4. I have significant mental health and physical disabilities. I have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (“PTSD”) stemming from repeated childhood violence that I suffered. In addition, I have been diagnosed with anxiety and bipolar disorder. I also have chronic pain related to gall bladder surgery and have an intestinal blockage.
5. Because of my PTSD, I cannot sleep through the night. I awaken at least twice a night and struggle to fall back asleep. I am also kept awake by restless leg syndrome, which is also a result of my PTSD. This leaves me tired and unable to function, even when I am able to block out and not think about the events for which I have PTSD.
6. After gall bladder surgery, I lost about 100 pounds, which was about half of my body weight. Thanks to self-medicating with marijuana, I later put most of that weight back on. Without marijuana, I have severe nausea and am unable to eat more than a few bites at a time. I have low energy and am frequently cold. All I can do is lay down and try to recover.
7. Conventional treatments for my PTSD have proven ineffective. Re-living my childhood trauma in therapy is too painful to endure, and despite repeated attempts at therapy, it

simply does not work for me. I also was prescribed medications including Seroquel, Depakote, and Zoloft. When I took these drugs, all I could do was eat and sleep; I had no energy or willpower to do anything else. I started cutting myself, so that I could watch the blood flow and know that I was still alive. I considered committing suicide.

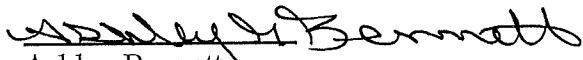
8. Conventional treatments have also failed to treat my nausea. I have received prescription-strength anti-nausea medications, but they did not abate my nausea.
9. I eventually started self-medicating with marijuana to treat these symptoms. It has allowed me to end my use of prescription medications for both my mental health and physical disabilities.
10. In December 2018, I was arrested for possessing marijuana and drug paraphernalia. I was sentenced to probation on September 4, 2019 and will be on probation until June 4, 2020.
11. On May 21, 2019, I received my medical marijuana card after a doctor certified me for its use.
12. I have used both medical marijuana flower and oils to treat my disabilities.
13. I was told at the end of August that I would not be able to use medical marijuana once I was sentenced because of a new policy adopted by the Lebanon County Court of Common Pleas. My probation officer has made it clear to me that medical marijuana is illegal and that he would violate my probation if I used it.
14. After I was sentenced, I stopped using medical marijuana. I spoke to my public defender, who said she was unable to help me with this issue.
15. Without medical marijuana, I have been unable to eat regularly and have lost 15 pounds in the past month. I have been too tired to take my children to things like football practice

and have had to rely on my boyfriend to step in. I have been missing out on being as fully involved in their lives as I was when I was using medical marijuana.

16. Before using marijuana to manage my mental health disabilities, I previously received psychiatric services through TW Ponessa & Associates. Now that I can no longer use medical marijuana, I need to explore resuming psychiatric treatment there. Unfortunately, I will be considered a new patient and have to wait 60 to 90 days for an appointment. I have limited options because my insurance is through Medicaid.
17. Placing me back on the same drugs to treat my PTSD will simply lead to the same results as last time—to the extent they help my PTSD, they will cause me to once again feel dead inside and it will only be a matter of time before I consider harming myself. No drugs other than marijuana have been effective at treating my nausea.
18. Medical marijuana has saved my life and made it bearable for the first time in many years.

Pursuant to 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904, I, Ashley Bennett, declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated: 10-8-19

  
Ashley Bennett