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TESTIMONY RE: H.B. BILL NO. 6715 (RAISED AN ACT CONCERNING THE
PALLIATIVE USE OF MARIJUANA

Judiciary Committee
February 26, 2007

Good morning Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for registered nurses in Connecticut. I am Lorraine Jalbert, a registered nurse and the chair of the CNA's Professional Practice Committee. I am providing comments in support of **H. B. (raised) Bill No. 6715, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PALLIATIVE USE OF MARIJUANA.**

In October 2004 the Connecticut Nurses' Association passed a resolution at their annual meeting establishing their position that patients should have safe access to therapeutic marijuana. The resolution identified the following to establish this position:

- marijuana/cannabis has a wide margin of safety for use under prescribed supervision, and it is effective for numerous conditions and cannot cause lethal reactions; and
- marijuana/cannabis seems to work differently from many conventional medications, making it a viable option for persons resistant to conventional medications; and
- many desperate patients and families risk breaking the law to gain access to marijuana/cannabis for therapeutic use; and
- sister organizations within ANA have taken positions in support of access to marijuana/cannabis for therapeutic use; and
- ANA's Congress on Nursing Practice in 1996 supported the education of registered professional nurses regarding current, evidence-based therapeutic uses of cannabis and the investigation of the therapeutic efficacy of cannabis in controlled trials; and

- nurses have an ethical obligation to be advocates for access to healthcare for all.

Based on the association's recommendations that were ratified through this resolution we:

- 1: Support the right of patients to have safe access to therapeutic marijuana/cannabis under appropriate prescriber supervision.**
- 2. Support legislation to remove criminal penalties including arrest and imprisonment for bona fide patients and prescribers of therapeutic marijuana/cannabis.**
- 3. Support research in controlled investigational trials on the therapeutic efficacy of marijuana/cannabis, including alternative methods of administration.**
- 4. Support and encourage the education of registered nurses regarding current, evidence based therapeutic use of marijuana/cannabis.**
- 5. Support the ability of health care providers to discuss and/or recommend the medicinal use of marijuana without the threat of intimidation or penalization.**

We urge the committee's support of this bill that would make available medicinal marijuana, under very specific criteria, for the few who need it, without fear of arrest and potential imprisonment.