

My name is Alejandro Wirth, I am 15 years old and I have Autism.

I would love to stand here and tell you how great of a student I am but that would be a lie. Despite testing above average on most standardized tests, I continue to fail 50% of my classes.

Autism is a daily battle and many days it's a battle I feel like I'm losing. I struggle with issues like sensory overload, severe anxiety, ODD, migraines and nose bleeds. I never know what kind of day I will have, until I'm putting myself back together.

I'm fighting a war that no one else can see and it's exhausting. When I'm unable to maintain control, I become angry with myself. Which often comes out toward teachers who most of the time don't understand me and it doesn't take long before I am labeled a disruptive student.

I have difficulty with my friends because they don't understand how I can be their best friend one minute and completely detached the next.

My sister Lily also has Autism. Lily was non-verbal and very aggressive to herself and everyone around her. Her out of control behavior made it unsafe to go out in public. Lily also has Dravet, a form of Epilepsy which caused her to seize hundreds of times a day and none of the drugs prescribed by doctors could control them.

Cannabis was the only option left. Three years ago, my sister was quietly dying.

After a few days using Haleigh's Hope CBD oil my sister began to talk, she now sings and talks in full sentences. A few months later her seizures were controlled, and my sister was seizure free for the first time in her entire life. My mom added Cannatol, a THC oil to see if that would help with the aggression and behaviors. THC is like flipping a switch and Lily is now able to play on a soccer team and even go to ballet class.

I don't have a qualifying condition such as Epilepsy. Autism is my diagnosis and that is why this bill is so important to me. If you pass this bill I too can use Cannabis to treat Autism like my sister.

No one sees my mind dying inside my healthy body. Severe Anxiety has led to frequent nose bleeds and migraines so severe that I often lose my vision and must crawl along the walls to find a safe place to wait it out.

I am missing school even when I'm sitting in class because I am trying so hard to remain calm and in control.

I have been given anti-depressants, mood stabilizers and stimulants to treat the spectrum of issues I face due to Autism. The number one side effect of most of these drugs is suicidal behaviors and increased aggression.

When I talk to my doctor about feeling out of control I leave with a new prescription. My biggest fear is becoming another statistic. It scares me knowing that losing control could kill me. It scares me that the next drug we try could kill me.

I want people to realize how life or death Autism can be. My disability is invisible and sometimes it makes me feel invisible too.

Today I hope you see me and others on the spectrum like me that would benefit from access to Cannabis.

My sister and I both have Autism, but it affects us differently, Cannabis continued to be an option to treat my sister's Autism because it was accessed to treat seizures.

Today I'm here asking for the same privilege to a plant that could save my life too.

Thank you for your time and please support HB-1263, Cannabis for Autism

# My EVERYTHING

Fall 2016



**ACCEPTANCE** **AWARENESS** **& INCLUSION**