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Ms.Kott

English 11

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Marijuana in Public Schools

Jack Splitt wasn’t like everyone else. Sure, he went to school, had a loving family and a group of friends. He had long, dark brown hair and bright blue eyes. Seems pretty normal right? But he wasn’t normal. He had cerebral palsy and dystonia, a neurological disorder caused by a non-progressive brain injury or malformation that occurs while the child’s brain is under development, affecting body movement and muscle coordination. He was wheelchair bound for life, had a feeding tube to help him eat and had a breathing tube coming out of his throat to help him breathe. He constantly had a nurse with him. Some days, the pain that came with the severity of his disorder, made him sick and he couldn’t go to school. This terrible pain limited what he was able to do in life. He wasn’t able to do much. His disability wasn’t a disability anymore, it was a wall. He used a mixture of pharmaceuticals, some to help with his disability and some to counter the side effects of the pharmaceuticals, but with little results. His whole life changed when a doctor suggested that he tried a different treatment: marijuana. No, Jack wasn’t going to go get high to help his pain, but instead, used a medical patch that delivers a marijuana- based treatment into his bloodstream, that isn’t legal to use in schools. His whole attitude changed after this medicine took effect. Jack was happy. He smiled, was more lively and was able to go to school on a daily basis.

Jack's dead now.

He started his medical marijuana treatment in 2014, and he died August 25, 2016. Leaving Jack with about two years of a happier life. Marijuana changed him and his life for the better. Even though the treatment wasn’t legal for him to use during school, it helped.

Jack was able to go to school and learn because of the treatment he had received. But going to a public school, made it almost impossible for him to use his medication on school grounds because no drugs are allowed on school grounds. Jeffco schools do not allow kids with disabilities to use marijuana based treatments on school grounds, even if it is severe and helps with their disability. I think that should change.

Jacks treatment was an oil form of cannabidiol, or CBD. Combined with lower concentrations of tetrahydrocannabinol or (THC), you know, the stuff that helps you find profound meaning in Pink Floyd lyrics. But, CBD doesn’t cause a high like THC does, making it non-psychoactive. The CBD regulates through his body and stops the extreme pain that Jack feels.

Pain blocked Jack’s education and ability learn. He wasn’t able to get the same education as most kids because of his disabilities. Because marijuana isn’t legal to have in schools for kids with disabilities, it limited Jack’s education. A kid shouldn’t be limited from an education, just because he doesn’t have the same abilities as most kids. He’s entitled to the same education as everyone else.

Medical marijuana can also be given to children who suffer from epilepsy, to calm or keep kids from having seizures. In cases where a child has a seizure, medical marijuana can be used to keep pain down and stop the spasms. Maddie Gorman, an 8 year old who has a severe form of epilepsy, called lennox-gastaut syndrome (LGS), uses a type of medical marijuana called, Charlotte's Web. An oil that is mostly CBD based and has less than .3 percent THC. At her lowest point, she was having up to 300 seizures a day. Some were worse than others, ranging from complete sasms on the floor for 3 minuets, to her just blanking out for 30 seconds. After a week of starting Charlotte's Web, her seizures seemed shorter and less intense. Then a month later, Maddie was consistently having far fewer seizures.

Although there should be limits for giving medical marijuana during school hours. Giving this medication to underaged kids must require a doctor's note, to prevent other kids from obtaining this drug. A nurse or other doctor-affiliated personnel must give the oils/marijuana to the patient, so a teacher wouldn’t be in charge of giving medication. The learning environment shouldn’t be changed because of medical marijuana being introduced into schools. After all, there are still kids who are trying to get the same education.

Jack was at a disadvantage when it came to the timing of his treatment. During the first few month of his treatment, he was at school and his nurse was giving him his marijuana treatment but a teacher had a problem with that. Went up to Jack, pulled the cannabis patch out of his arm and confiscated the oil. The teacher took away the medicine that was saving Jack’s life. If marijuana was legal for him at this time, this conflict wouldn’t have increased to such a big level.

In Colorado, recreational and medical marijuana has been legal for about 2 years now. Later in 2014, when all of that became legal, Jack still wasn’t able to carry his medication around with him, with the fear that it would be taken away. Pushing the schools to allow this for Jack would not only help him, but the many other people who have severe disorders. Like Maddie. Using the treatment helped her, but she wouldn’t be able to use it during school if something happened. Legalization of marijuana in schools would help more than hurt.

Marijuana isn’t a bad guy. Jack suffered less because of the effects of marijuana. It helped him more than hurt him. Medical marijuana should be legal for kids with disabilities to use in schools because it helps more kids with disabilities go to school and reduces the pain they are in. It opens up the world of education to more kids with disabilities who wouldn’t be able to do so otherwise. That is something you can’t just give away, you have to work for. That’s why medical marijuana should be legal for kids with disabilities to use during school hours.