

# ASMSU- Medical Amnesty Testimony

(10/14/09)

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Thank you Mr. Chairmen and members of the committee...

My name is Kyle Dysarz, and I am speaking to you on behalf of ASMSU, Michigan State University's undergraduate student government. We represent the voice of the 36,000 undergraduate students at Michigan State.

In the past two years we have made a commitment to working to better the health and safety of students on campus. Today, I hope that in addressing this committee, I can better help you understand some of the harrowing experiences of thousands of your constituents. One by one we have been uniting in support of this change and yes, while it started on MSU's campus, Medical Amnesty is now recognized across the state as both a crucial health and safety issue for all of Michigan's residents.

Disregarding individual backgrounds and political ideologies, I hope that we can all agree that the soul purpose of House Bill 4876 is to allow for the health, safety, and life of any person to be this state's first priority.

This is the commitment that the students at MSU and across the state are trying to make. As ASMSU moved forward with trying to work with the entire campus community to make sure that minors in emergency situations involving alcohol are calling for help, we realized a major roadblock in our education efforts. It is illegal to try and educate students that the police officers' first AND ONLY priority in these situations is the health and safety of the victim.

And so, I ask you to put yourself in your constituents' shoes: Can you imagine the fear in a student who finds themselves in the position of deciding whether or not a friend is ill enough to warrant a hospital visit, the burden of knowing you must decide between a Minor in Possession citation for yourself or your friend? Anxiety and panic set in as you realize the decision rests in your hands. An MIP—or a hospital trip? No student should have to decide between the health and safety of a peer and the severe ramifications of an MIP. The reality of today is that there is a legitimate fear of legal consequences one might face after calling for help that deters it sadly keeps people from making that call.

This was the case when a young MSU female, who was heartbroken over a relationship problem, made the poor decision to turn toward an excessive amounts of alcohol and friends. Throughout that night the young female had nearly an entire fifth of liquor and passed out while

throwing up in the bathroom. Her friends, who were also minors, were terrified of the possible legal consequences for her and them and made the common decision to see if she would sleep it off, left her all alone, unwatched. Finally, the student's roommate returned to their room to find her unconscious on the floor, and made the responsible decision to call for help. True story.

This is the type of situation that we are trying to prevent with HB 4876. I assure you, that this case is not an isolated and rare incident. It happens regularly on college communities across the state. Protecting citizens live should be the ONLY priority of law. But, if the current law is not changed then our officers across the state will continued to be forced to write these students in danger and their friend who call for help MIP citations. The threat of legal consequences keeps students and other minors from not calling for medical help in an emergency. And, in certain circumstances, individuals may continue to be left alone and extremely vulnerable to various types of precarious situations, including sexual predators. We want, and need, to be advocating for minors to call in emergencies, but we can't do that until all impeding threats are lifted and the current law is changed.

House Bill 4876, is not the work of just one organization or person: Prosecutors, Police Officers, and public health officials all have

collectively worked to make this change one that is universally acceptable for our state. I want to thank Representative Meadows and his office, for all of their hard work on this and for realizing the dire necessity for this change.

The Associated Students of Michigan State University will continue to work with the city, university, and health officials to make sure students are being educated on the many aspects of alcohol and health related issues. Now, all that we ask of you as your constituents is to do your part as legislators and fight to make sure that all parents, family members, and friends across the state of Michigan, well never be at risk of losing a loved one because no one made a call out of fear. Thank you for both your time and support of House Bill 4876.