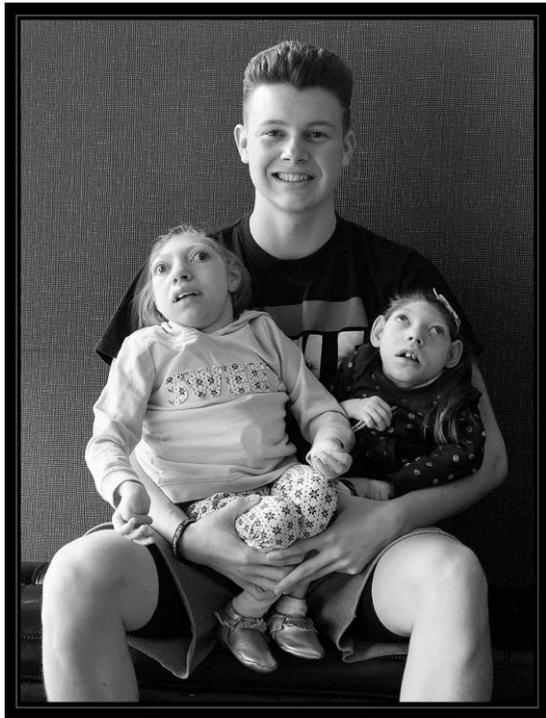


March 9, 2019

Dear Kansas Legislators,

My name is Nichole Montanez. I'm writing to you on behalf of Lola Hartley, in loving memory of Claire Hartley, and for all of the other children of Kansas re: HB 2244 – Claire and Lola's Law. I am an artist/journalist living in Colorado. I'm also an aunt. My niece is 13 years old and has Dravet syndrome – a catastrophic form of epilepsy. It is through her that I met the Charlotte Figi family many years ago. I became aware of CBD (cannabidiol oil) when Paige Figi began treating Charlotte with it in 2012. I had a front row seat and was able to see for myself the effectiveness of this treatment for Charlotte. Because of my background in journalism, I asked Paige if we could do a story. She agreed and I started photographing Charlotte.

In August of 2013, "WEED" aired on CNN with Sanjay Gupta. Families across the country began a migration to Colorado to see if CBD could work for their children as well. I didn't put my camera down for the next 5 1/2 years. I was inspired to start a photo series called Face of Cannabis to put a new face on medical cannabis in an attempt to remove the stigma. I knew all too well the attitudes and preconceptions surrounding this controversial plant. I, too, was in the



"no way" camp. But I saw it work. And I kept seeing it over and over again, for years.

Because I live so closely with many of the families, I am able to continue the relationship and the documenting. I am aware of their successes and their failures. I've watched as children who couldn't walk began taking steps. I've watched kids with feeding tubes suddenly have the desire to eat by mouth. I've heard non-verbal kids start to babble and form words. I've seen their eyes become bright. I've seen children become sober for the first time. Yes, sober. The majority of these children are taking CBD oil with 3 - 5% THC. They're not getting high. As the CBD began to work, many parents were able to start tapering off some of the benzos previously used to keep seizures at bay.

I'm not anti-pharmaceutical. I believe in children having access to whatever works for them. These disorders are catastrophic, and each child is so different. They need to be given every opportunity to find out what is the best treatment.



I'm also not pro-cannabis. I'm pro-child. It just so happens that this is a viable treatment being withheld from many out of fear.



Will it work for everyone? No. But I will say this: I've met and photographed hundreds of children using CBD oil, and I've not seen harmful side-effects. Does everyone deserve the right to try? Yes. And they deserve the right to try in their very own home. In their home state & to avoid prosecution.

As I sit here writing this, I'm doing a mental rundown on kids I know personally from Kansas who have been uprooted and forced to live hundreds of miles from their families.

Sydni.  
Sofie.  
Michaela.

And those are just the ones I know. Maybe they could finally come home.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nichole Montanez