

January 5, 2004

The Honorable William J. Haynes, Jr.
U.S. District Judge
c/o Peter J. Strianse, Esq.
Tune, Entrekin and White, PC
Suite 2100, AmSouth Center
315 Deaderick Street
Nashville, TN 37238-2100

Dear Judge, Haynes,

My husband Bill and I have known Bernie Ellis for 23 years. He has been a neighbor and a fellow member of the Bethel community. He is community-minded and was instrumental in helping our community acquire an abandoned school house for a community center. To this day, the Bethel Community Center provides our community with a meeting place for any number of community events.

We have known Bernie as a neighbor who is willing to help fellow neighbors. He is extremely hardworking and energetic when the situation calls for this. He has turned a grown-up farm into a productive berry farm. He addressed the issue of the intentional poisoning of our creeks by a pro fisherman who didn't want any so-called "trash fish" in his (illegal) lake by taking the man to court and winning a jury verdict against him.

His career as an epidemiologist has involved tracking HIV/AIDS patients in Tennessee and Mississippi and setting up substance abuse reduction programs in New Mexico, Alabama and Wyoming.

Bernie's interest and work with the issue of medicinal marijuana is one shared by many people. As a Registered Nurse in a hospital setting, I have administered Marinol for patients suffering from cancer, anorexia and "failure to thrive" syndrome. These patients are not trying to "get high", they are seeking relief and help from these conditions. I do feel there is a place for this medicine, despite the current federal administration's stand. They equate marijuana to "hard" street drugs, when there is simply no comparison.

I hope that you will give consideration to the waste of resources of the judicial and penal systems in this case, and hopefully in any similar cases. Please consider as well the waste of a citizen obviously dedicated to improving the lives of people in this country.

Sincerely,

Deborah Mangrum, RN