

# EXTRACT



## Meet the attorney leading Florida's fight for medical cannabis

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November 8, 2016: 12:48 PM CT



(Photo credit: @JohnMorganESQ/Twitter)

When John Morgan founded his personal injury and consumer protection law firm Morgan & Morgan in 1988, the young Florida attorney set out with a clear mission: To “represent the people, not the powerful.”

“For the people” has remained a guiding principle as Morgan grew his law firm over the years, expanding to multiple locations throughout Florida, then nationally to offices in Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, New York, New Jersey, Alabama and Philadelphia, all while keeping his promise not to represent insurance carriers or large companies.

But Morgan's advocacy extends well beyond the courtroom. The now 60-year-old has taken on a number of social issues in his home state of Florida, including hunger relief

and medical marijuana legalization.

In 2013, Morgan announced his support for the campaign to legalize medical marijuana in Florida and became actively involved in the group United for Care. He quickly rose up as a leading voice in Florida's fight for medical cannabis, and his law firm has donated at least \$2.7 million dollars to the effort. Morgan also helped recruit volunteers to collect thousands of signatures needed to place Amendment 2 on Florida's 2016 general election ballot.

For Morgan, the issue of medical cannabis access is a deeply personal one.

"I started this fight for my brother Tim, who without marijuana would either be dead or in intense pain every day of his life ... and for my dad, who was able to keep his strength and stay with us a little longer, thanks to marijuana," Morgan said in a January 2016 release.

"I want sick and suffering patients like my brother to have the option to legally use medical marijuana," he said.

Although a similar amendment proposed during Florida's 2014 election cycle narrowly failed to get the 60 percent of votes needed to pass, Morgan is confident Amendment 2 will pass this Nov. 8.

"It was an off year election, it wasn't a presidential election so turn out was bad," Morgan said of the 2014 bid.

Amendment 2 would expand on Florida's current limited medical cannabis law, which only allows certain qualified patients to access low-THC, nonsmokable forms of medical marijuana.

Under the new measure, patients with cancer, epilepsy, glaucoma, HIV, AIDS, post-traumatic stress disorder, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Crohn's disease, Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis would be permitted to access whole-plant medical cannabis.

The measure would also allow licensed physicians to certify patients for medical cannabis treatment after diagnosing them with some "other debilitating medical conditions of the same kind or class as or comparable to those enumerated."

Ben Pollara, campaign manager and treasurer of United for Care, told the Orlando Sentinel that this year's ballot measure is different than the 2014 version in a few key ways. It clarifies the definitions of medical conditions eligible for cannabis treatment, and adds a provision requiring parental consent verified by a doctor and state health agency before minors can access the drug.

Polling suggests strong public support for Amendment 2 this time around.

According to a St. Leo University poll released in October, 71 percent of likely Florida voters support Amendment 2 – well above the 60 percent threshold needed to pass. The same poll found just 22 percent of Florida voters oppose Amendment 2 and 7 percent were undecided.

"Compassion is coming," Morgan said in a release. "This November, Florida will pass this law and hundreds of thousands of sick and suffering people will see relief."

Medical cannabis is currently legal in 25 states and the District of Columbia. On Election Day, voters in Florida, Montana, North Dakota and Arkansas will all consider ballot measures to legalize medical cannabis as well.

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