



**Senator Steve Huffman**  
**5<sup>th</sup> District**  
**House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee**  
**April 9, 2019**  
**Senate Bill 57**

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Chairman Koehler, Vice-Chair Smith, Ranking Member Brent, and Members of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee: Thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony today on Senate Bill 57.

With the recent passing of the 2018 Federal Farm Bill, industrial hemp has been removed from the list of scheduled substances banned by the federal government and can now be grown as a commodity crop throughout the US. During the past several years, while Congress worked to change hemp's legal status, many states adopted hemp pilot programs permitted by federal law so that farmers in their jurisdictions could begin planting and harvesting hemp. Ohio is now one of only a handful of states that has not passed legislation to address hemp's change in legal status. It is imperative that Ohio moves quickly so that our farmers can take advantage of a domestic hemp marketplace and catch up with our neighboring states

For millennia, Hemp has been used by most cultures for four main uses: food, fuel, fiber, and medicine. Hemp is not marijuana. While industrial hemp and marijuana both derive from the same plant genus, they possess many different properties—the main difference being that industrial hemp contains only trace amounts of THC (the intoxicating chemical in marijuana), so it does not produce psychoactive effects on humans like marijuana does. Following federal law, hemp grown in Ohio must contain no more than 0.3% THC.

In Aug. 2018, the Ohio Board of Pharmacy ruled that (cannabidiol) CBD oil had to be sold through the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program. However, with the passage of the 2018 Federal Farm Bill, hemp was taken off the controlled substances list and is permanently an agricultural commodity. Thus, SB 57 follows that law and likewise clarifies Ohio law by changing the relevant definitions and removing hemp and hemp derived products like CBD from Ohio's controlled substances list. We are distinguishing hemp from marijuana just as the federal government has done and making hemp and hemp products legal for sale.

Also in accordance with federal law, hemp cultivation license holders will need to complete a background check to ensure they have not been convicted of a felony drug offense in the last ten years. Misdemeanors and minor possession charges will not prevent anyone from obtaining a license to grow hemp. Only the license holder will be required to receive a background check, not every individual involved in the operation.

Hemp can grow nearly anywhere in most climates. It requires little to no pesticides and pulls pollutants such as lead and phosphorous out the soil. The seeds can be turned to seed meal/cake or eaten whole as a food source. The fiber can be used in twine, caulking, auto bodies, building material, concrete (“hempcrete”), plastic composites, cordage, textiles, paper, and household goods. As a paper product, one acre of hemp can produce as much as 4-10 acres of trees over a 20 year cycle, while only taking 4 month to mature, whereas trees can require decades. Hemp paper is also higher quality and does not yellow, crack or deteriorate, while requiring fewer chemicals to process than trees.

The legislation before you today has the support of the Ohio Farm Bureau, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, NFIB, as well as input from several other stakeholders. SB 57 has the full intention of helping and doing what is best for Ohio farmers and we will continue to work with them to find the best solutions to any concerns with the legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony to you today, I am happy to answer any questions you may have.