

Good Morning Mr. Speaker, Vice Chair, Ranking Member and committee members. My name is Tim Johnson, on behalf of the Ohio Cannabis Chamber of Commerce, its membership as a whole and various other pro hemp and pro cannabis organizations, groups and associations in the great state of Ohio I share with you concerns and input as an interested party with the changes being presented in the creation of SB57.

With current legislation in Ohio SB1 addressing over regulation reform and SB3 addressing penalties reform, it's clear to see neither hold any interest in the regulatory thought process in creating SB57. May we learn from the findings of HB523 , the OMMCP, that over regulation through micro managing, rules, policies and limitations presents the failure in the roll out of a program that might best be successful through a permitting the market to work the market business principles. Clearly a HEMP program in Ohio would best be served through facts and science over morals and values. Yes, regulation too is a necessity for the production of safe products and the efficacy of the program. For the farmers and small businesses alike, let the market work the market to a successful program for all Ohioans. Trust in Ohio's business owners to do the right thing and promote a healthy vigorous program.

With federal passage of the 2018 Agriculture Improvement Act (FARM BILL ACT 2018) it has clearly classified hemp as a commodity. When Ohio sees a need to change this classification placement and remove its commodity status, it only shows validity to over regulatory compliance policies. The true valued science behind the hemp plant places it less lethal than many commodity items used daily for or not for consumption. Never has there been a health crisis warning issued through valid negative science findings as a harm to society.

The concern and care of saving lives through regulation are alarming when Ohioans see deaths daily from products of approval such as alcohol, firearms, tobacco, home use chemicals and some in the foods we consume. The loss of life, family disruptions, tax burdens, health concerns and societal issues are certainly a priority concern the aforementioned feed. The sciences exist in the masses for the safe consumption of hemp products, whole or part. An open mind will find and believe this truth. Search the history of hemp and share faith in the preponderance of evidence to the values of this plant from those who have researched the plant for decades.

While the nation faces a work force pool depletion it has been noted a vast percentage of this problem rests on the structure of our own criminal justice system with its mass incarceration policies, non violent offender penalties and a continued life time employment punishment status for convictions. Even our second chance program known as the ILC , intervention in lieu of conviction, contradicts its own purpose of giving a second chance to first time offenders who comply with a court ordered program and receive a closed and sealed case of privacy permitting the offender a second chance to seek profitable and taxable employment thus avoiding the non tax paying employed community fueled by the system. An offender must plead guilty to be awarded an ILC and employment applications along with background checks request and state a plea of guilty must be noted. This only nullifies the ILC second chance program.

Licensing of the Ohio hemp market program stands to present another hurdle for many to not be privileged with participating in the program. All Ohioans should be afforded the opportunity of gamefull, tax paying employment as their contribution to society. Restrictions on over licensing and qualifying standards turn many to the tax free employment community. Let Ohio educate Ohio in this new but known industry for the betterment of the Ohio workforce pool. We ask that as any other herbs, fruit, vegetable or plant that all Ohians desiring home production, cultivation and use be permitted such a right to a non intoxicating/harmful plant.

Clarify Ohio's grey area stance on hemp for all Ohioans and Ohio itself. Currently Ohio has hemp classified under three classifications, federal schedule 1, OMMCP schedule 2 and for big pharma schedule 5. Where rests the unbiased fairness that all be treated equally. Hemp is a non harmful commodity. Save lives through science supported regulation and remove the burdens on our courts, corrections and the life risks our first responders.

Protect Ohio small businesses and Ohioans as well from persecution of a commodity merely days away from a legal, vibrant, and growing Ohio community. Act on the facts and sciences of today and discard the propaganda and fallacies of the past. Place SB57 into emergency status as to reflect, immediately effective upon the governor's signature.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate today and I will do my best to address any questions.