
**Ohio 135TH General Assembly
Senate General Government Committee
Proponent SB9/Sub Bill Revise Ohio Medical Cannabis Program
December 04, 2023**

Chairman Rulli, Vice Chair Schuring/Cirino/S.Huffman, Ranking member Demora and members of the Senate General Government Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present interested party testimony before you today regarding HB86 Sub Bill in its proposed revision language to Issue2, Ohio's Adult Choice Cannabis Program.

My name is Tim Johnson, my full testimony has been submitted to all of you. In respect to the committee's time I wish to elaborate on a few language proposal changes rather than my full submission.

To clear the air may I first share the fear mongering misinformation shared and insults to the voting constituents of Ohio as to not knowing what we were voting on in an attempt to get NO votes on Issue2 was disgusting. To challenge the intelligence of this industry which bears a higher level of scholastic educated owners, employees, patients and participants than the political leaders of this state was unwarranted. The truth be told when a no vote was cast it shared the acceptance to continue criminalizing the cannabis community as a whole, it promoted the destruction of families, it promoted the loss of child custody, it promoted the loss of employment, it promoted the continued act of criminalizing non violent statute offenders, it promoted mass in incarceration, it promoted the loss of a right to a higher education, it promoted the unjust use of law enforcement and our courts...etc.

With that said let us look at the reason why a YES vote was cast. We most certainly understood what our votes were for. In truth the main reason 2.2 mill Ohio voters cast their vote was to end the criminalization of the cannabis community. We are not asking for your permission to consume cannabis or to participate in the cannabis industry. We have been consuming and producing cannabis products for the last fifty plus years via

the illicit market in Ohio to a monetary value of 4-5 billion dollars a year, unregulated and untaxed. What we are asking for is a system to stop criminalizing us over a plant with science based medicinal values and a plant that to date has never been identified as the cause and factor of a death. Allow us to participate in the legal tax paying markets of employment, to continue our education, to raise productive families and to be productive members of society. It's that simple.....

Public Safety.... Concerns of public safety are always a topic in most all industries. However, true concerns should rest in those industries bringing harm upon our society such as alcohol, tobacco, firearms and pharmaceutical drugs. The pejorative impact these industries employ upon our society, in our homes, churches, schools, work and social events runs rampant with little to no legislative attention other than promoting more alcohol on our streets, SB13/moonshine, lack of effective regulations on tobacco and pharmaceuticals and eliminating taxes on firearms, SB124.

Taxes... Tax dollars should not go toward Law Enforcement budgets for training, equipment, salaries or benefits. Ohio Law Enforcement received \$250 million from the state Covid, relief monies in 2022, all agencies have Drug Seizure Asset funds (a secondary budget) and the Ohio Attorney General has received nearly \$1 billion in lawsuits against big pharma in the last three years. The alcohol, tobacco, big pharma and firearms (SB124) industries are not providing tax dollars to law enforcement to help combat or treat the problems they have created in our society. LE funding/tax bases come from local and state taxes, local levies, federal grants and from the above mentioned resources. Why has it become the responsibility of the cannabis industry to financially supplement the harms mentioned above created by the above mentioned industries and the irresponsible budgeting in law enforcement departments? Why are SB35 and HB326 needed? If the answer is tax dollars to pay for LE training and equipment, again I say get it from those industries of irresponsible care for society as a whole.

THC limits... THC limits of 35% maximum on flower and 70% maximum on extracts is only practical and in accordance with the current medical program caps. To place a 25% on flower and 50% on extracts holds no valid action to prevent any concerns

of addiction, overdosing or impairment. It only creates confusion and unwarranted expenses on the industry disciplines, especially within dispensary sales. All products for adults use or medical use are best to carry the same profiles and percentages per regulatory compliance to reduce any safety concerns of products being dispersed to the wrong consumer. Within this mindset of lower percentages should we also lower the percentages in pharmaceuticals, alcohol, the number of tobacco products purchased and the caliber of firearm ammunition???

Personal cultivation AKA Home grown... This practice should fall under fundamental or inalienable rights as it is a practice within the privacy of one's private property, not harmful to society and permits the production of a specific plant profile specific to one's medical ailment needs. Personal cultivation provides an alternative right to a healthcare choice. Not all applicable medical ailments are covered under the limited conditions presented in the Ohio Medical Cannabis Program. Further personal cultivation shares two priority practices; consistent production of the same profiled product and financial relief from commercial retail pricing. To remove personal cultivation is to encourage the growth of the illicit market, to reduce consumer participation in a safe and regulated market and to disrespect and undermine the will and rights of the voters through the initiative process. A national study revealed less than 10% of the cannabis community will ever try personal cultivation and most will fail. Redacting personal cultivation will not bring those who participate in it now to a regulatory market of compliance. In fact, having no personal cultivation rights may encourage illicit criminal activities. To be inclusive in personal cultivation is to reduce wasted time in prevalent law enforcement services to more serious crimes of harm to society, to reduce the courts work loads and to reduce non violent mass incarceration practices.

While I applaud several areas of language revisions I respectfully request reconsideration to the points of interest presented in the committee yesterday.

I would also like to introduce the fact that Ohio has over 2 thousand grocery stores/markets, 470 liquor agencies and 76 distilleries vs the potential 230 dispensary cap.

To limit the values of compounds in whole plant cannabis, Delta 8, 9, 10, only reduces the value of the plant. Address the synthetic products created and their safety concerns. May I remind you childrens Hospital is conducting studies with children on a federal grant.

To point out how many cannabis joints can be obtained from a single plant is misleading and irrelevant to the fact Ohio laws do not dictate how many tobacco products nor how many alcohol products one may possess or consume.

The implementation of an affirmative defense for personal cultivation, possession limits and private property consumption is paramount while the rule promulgation process takes place.

Thank you for attention to these points and to your respect for the Ohio voters, your constituents. I am happy to address any questions.

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