

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Connor Starost, and I have been working at Centerville Smoke Shop for a few years. I love my job because it allows me to connect with people from all walks of life and hear their unique stories. Every day, I look forward to meeting new people and building meaningful relationships through my work. This job has given me stability and a sense of purpose, allowing me to move into an apartment near my workplace and feel secure in my career—until now.

I was alarmed to learn about SB326 and the potential ban on hemp products. As someone who manages the store and oversees purchasing, I make it a priority to buy hemp products only from reliable suppliers and to enforce strict policies to ensure safety and compliance. For example, it is both my personal practice and store policy to ID everyone who enters the store, ensuring all customers are at least 21 years old before I even answer their questions.

While reading about SB326, I was surprised to learn that there are currently no formal statewide age restrictions on hemp products. This shows a clear opportunity for regulation rather than a complete ban. By implementing appropriate guidelines—such as clear age restrictions, safety standards, and sourcing requirements—we can address concerns without destroying the livelihoods of workers like me or the businesses that provide essential jobs in our communities.

The proposed ban would not only take away my sense of stability but also harm the countless customers who rely on these products and the businesses that support them. I urge you to reconsider SB326 and opt for balanced regulation instead of prohibition.

Thank you for your time and for considering the voices of workers like me.

Sincerely,

Connor Staros

Manger at Centerville Smoke Shop