

As Introduced

**135th General Assembly
Regular Session
2023-2024**

S. R. No. 216

Senators Romanchuk, Johnson

A RESOLUTION

To express the Ohio Senate's opposition to Issue 2 1
on the November 7, 2023, statewide ballot, which 2
would legalize the use and retail sale of 3
recreational marijuana; to identify the problems, 4
risks, dangers, burdens, and costs it would bring 5
to Ohioans, employers, and communities; and to 6
encourage Ohioans to vote against the measure. 7

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

WHEREAS, The commercial marijuana industry has paid to 8
write a statute which would legalize the use and retail sale of 9
marijuana for recreational purposes and then has paid to collect 10
the signatures to get the proposed law on the November 7, 2023, 11
statewide ballot; and 12

WHEREAS, The commercial marijuana industry had 13
approximately \$30 billion in revenue nationwide in 2022, and 14
studies project that the industry could eventually earn as much 15
as \$4 billion in Ohio if recreational marijuana is legalized; 16
and 17

WHEREAS, The National Institutes of Health, Mayo Clinic, 18
Cleveland Clinic, and World Health Organization have all 19
determined that marijuana is an addictive drug and can produce 20
dependency and withdrawal; and 21

WHEREAS, Since 2007, drug overdoses have been the leading 22
cause of injury death in Ohio, and 33,000 Ohioans have died of 23
drug overdoses between 2011 and 2020; and 24

WHEREAS, Marijuana is a "gateway" drug, and research shows 25
that four out of ten regular marijuana users go on to experiment 26
with other drugs; and 27

WHEREAS, Regular marijuana use more than doubles the risk 28
of developing opioid-use disorder or initiating nonmedical 29
prescription opioid use; and 30

WHEREAS, Regular marijuana use can irreversibly reduce 31
intelligence, memory, and learning ability; and 32

WHEREAS, The increased availability of marijuana from 33
legalization correlates with an alarming increase in emergency 34
room visits for children due to marijuana ingestion, 35
particularly by the youngest children; and 36

WHEREAS, The human brain continues to develop until 37
approximately the age of 25, and regular marijuana use during 38
adolescence and up to this age can change the way the brain 39
functions in adulthood, risking impacts to academic performance, 40
IQ, and behavior; and 41

WHEREAS, Marijuana use in adolescence is associated with an 42
increased risk of psychosis, a severe mental disorder 43
characterized by distorted thinking and a loss of touch with 44
reality, as well as depression and suicide; and 45

WHEREAS, States that have legalized recreational marijuana 46
have seen an increase in fatal traffic crashes and injury- 47
causing traffic crashes, with marijuana-impaired driving 48
fatalities doubling in Colorado and Washington, the first two 49
states to legalize recreational marijuana; and 50

WHEREAS, States that have legalized recreational marijuana 51
have seen increases in their crimes rates, with the crime rate 52

in Colorado, one of the first states to legalize recreational marijuana, increasing 11 times faster than the rest of the nation since legalization, including an 18.6% increase in violent crimes; and

WHEREAS, States that have legalized recreational marijuana have still seen significant sales of unregulated, black market marijuana, with Oregon seeing 70% of all marijuana sales being on the black market and up to five times the amount of marijuana purchased in the state being taken out of the state for illegal sales elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, Legalizing recreational marijuana creates great risks at the workplace to employers, other workers, customers, and others; and

WHEREAS, Other states that have legalized recreational marijuana have seen significant increases in workers who show up to work impaired, including an increase of 48% in Nevada; and

WHEREAS, Marijuana-impaired employees cause 55% more industrial accidents and 85% more on-the-job injuries, and employees who regularly use marijuana experience 75% more absenteeism; and

WHEREAS, Increased workplace accidents will inevitably create new cost pressures for Ohio's stable workers compensation system, leading one member of the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation Board of Directors to recently say that he expects legalization of recreational marijuana to drive up rates; and

WHEREAS, The commercial marijuana industry is seeking exceptionally favorable tax rates for itself, 10%, less than one-third the tax rate for casino gambling; and

WHEREAS, The commercial marijuana industry's proposed distribution of tax revenue would provide no funds to public education nor to Ohio's counties, which administer the human

services programs that will bear the brunt of increased 84
addiction treatment needs and other challenges resulting from 85
increased drug usage; and 86

WHEREAS, The commercial marijuana industry's proposed law 87
would steer more than one-third of tax revenue back to the 88
industry itself in the form of a so-called "social equity" 89
program; now therefore be it 90

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the Senate of the State 91
of Ohio, conclude that the proposed statute authored by the 92
commercial marijuana industry does not serve the best interests 93
of the people of Ohio, will bring unacceptable threats and risks 94
to the health of all Ohioans, especially children, will create 95
dangers in the workplace and unacceptable challenges and costs 96
to employers, will make Ohio's roads more dangerous, will impose 97
significant new, unfunded costs to Ohio's public social 98
services, and serves only to advance the financial interests of 99
the commercial marijuana industry and its investors; and be it 100
further 101

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the Senate of Ohio, urge 102
the people of the State of Ohio to reject Issue 2, the 103
legalization of recreational marijuana, and in so doing preserve 104
and protect our state's high quality of life, the health and 105
safety of our citizens, the strength and prosperity of our 106
communities, our strong economic growth, our favorable 107
environment for business success, and opportunity for all 108
citizens and the future for our young people; and be it further 109

RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit duly 110
authenticated copies of this resolution to the Governor and news 111
media of Ohio. 112