

**As Adopted by the Senate**

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

**S. R. No. 216**

**Senators Romanchuk, Johnson**

**Cosponsors: Senators Brenner, Cirino, Dolan, Gavarone, Hackett, Hoagland,  
Huffman, S., Landis, Lang, O'Brien, Reynolds, Roegner, Schaffer, Wilkin, Wilson**

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**A R E S O L U T I O N**

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 dependency and withdrawal; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 53  
marijuana, increasing 11 times faster than the rest of the 54  
nation since legalization, including an 18.6% increase in 55  
violent crimes; and 56

WHEREAS, States that have legalized recreational marijuana 57  
have still seen significant sales of unregulated, black market 58  
marijuana, with Oregon seeing 70% of all marijuana sales being 59  
on the black market and up to five times the amount of marijuana 60  
purchased in the state being taken out of the state for illegal 61  
sales elsewhere; and 62

WHEREAS, Legalizing recreational marijuana creates great 63  
risks at the workplace to employers, other workers, customers, 64  
and others; and 65

WHEREAS, Other states that have legalized recreational 66  
marijuana have seen significant increases in workers who show up 67  
to work impaired, including an increase of 48% in Nevada; and 68

WHEREAS, Marijuana-impaired employees cause 55% more 69  
industrial accidents and 85% more on-the-job injuries, and 70  
employees who regularly use marijuana experience 75% more 71  
absenteeism; and 72

WHEREAS, Increased workplace accidents will inevitably 73  
create new cost pressures for Ohio's stable workers compensation 74  
system, leading one member of the Ohio Bureau of Workers' 75  
Compensation Board of Directors to recently say that he expects 76  
legalization of recreational marijuana to drive up rates; and 77

WHEREAS, The commercial marijuana industry is seeking 78  
exceptionally favorable tax rates for itself, 10%, less than 79  
one-third the tax rate for casino gambling; and 80

WHEREAS, The commercial marijuana industry's proposed 81

distribution of tax revenue would provide no funds to public 82  
education nor to Ohio's counties, which administer the human 83  
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