

# A RESOLUTION

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

*Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Ohio:*

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

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

WHEREAS, The National Institutes of Health, Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, and World Health Organization have all 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 have seen increases in their crimes rates, with the crime rate 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 addiction treatment needs and other challenges resulting from increased drug usage; and

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

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

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

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

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*President \_\_\_\_\_ of the Senate.*

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_