

Ohio House Finance Committee

March 12, 2025

HB 96 – Opponent Testimony (Adult-Use Marijuana Law Changes)

Chairman Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

The Sycamore Township Board of Trustees, Hamilton County, submits testimony in opposition to the portions of House Bill 96 which seek to alter the existing voter approved legislation for local revenue related to recreational marijuana sales. The proposed changes would eliminate an important revenue source that was promised to local communities who worked with retail providers and constituents to ensure marijuana was dispensed properly as voted on by the electorate.

Local governments have been seeking alternative ways to fund services despite cutbacks in revenue from the state as well as new unfunded mandates at both the federal and state levels. The way in which the marijuana law was approved by the voters offered a clear path for local communities to decide if potential revenues were worth the uncertainty of what dispensaries could bring them.

A key component of the existing law redirects 36% of the voter approved 10% sales tax back to the host community. This potential revenue source was an important factor in Sycamore Township's conditional lifting of its moratorium to allow the retail operation of a dispensary. Unfortunately, not only does the marijuana portion of HB96 increase the tax rate to 20% which will have a detrimental effect on sales with the other alternatives that currently exist, it also redirects the tax revenue back to the state – thereby eliminating the local revenue component.

Sycamore Township respected the process and based its decisions on these uses and their subsequent revenues with the understanding of what the voters decided. To take away this revenue places an additional burden on the local community to seek alternative funding that was being planned for as a result of the law.

As fiscal stewards of taxpayer funds, Sycamore Township believes that it is wise and prudent to look for alternative sources of revenue to fund our basic services before going to the voters for a property tax increase. As a Township that has not asked its residents for a property tax increase since 2006, we are proof that when given tools and opportunities, there are ways to fund services without consistently asking the voters to raise their property tax. The voter approved marijuana law is another example of how Sycamore Township would seek to find a way to increase revenue for continued funding of services without going back to the taxpayers. Changing the rules after the fact does a disservice to communities who planned for the future based on rules established by the voters.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate the work the House Finance Committee must complete in order to move legislation forward. We urge the committee to protect this local revenue source as approved by the majority of Ohio voters.

Respectfully,

Tracy Schwegmann, Chair
Tom Weidman, Vice Chair
Tracy Kellums, Trustee



Hamilton County, OH

8540 Kenwood Road
Sycamore Twp, OH
45236-2010
PH (513) 791-8447
FX (513) 792-8564

Board of Trustees

Tracy Schwegmann
Tom Weidman
Tracy Kellums

Fiscal Officer

Jonathan T. Deters

Law Director

Lawrence E. Barbieri

Administrator

Greg Bickford, AICP

Assistant

**Administrator/Human
Resource Manager**
Beth Gunderson

Fire Chief

Rob Penny

Superintendent

Steve Reutelshofer

Planning & Zoning

Administrator
Jeff Uckotter