



**Representative Tex Fischer**  
**59<sup>th</sup> Ohio House District**

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 198. This bill addresses the gap in current law, which allows unregulated operators to sell intoxicating hemp-derived products, such as delta-8 THC, directly to children. We often see packaging explicitly designed to mimic existing brands of snacks or candy.

This legislation introduces a regulatory framework to protect our communities while supporting Ohio's hemp industry. It establishes strict guidelines for these products, including mandatory child-resistant packaging for non-beverage products. This legislation also prohibits sales to anyone under 21 by requiring age verification at the point of sale. Additionally, the bill mandates that all hemp processors and retailers obtain licenses through the Department of Agriculture and ensures compliance with safety and testing standards for intoxicating hemp products.

While House Bill 198 imposes necessary regulations and safeguards in the areas we all agree need to be addressed, it preserves a viable market for responsible businesses and Ohio's hemp farmers. This balanced approach will eliminate bad actors, protect our children from harmful products, and foster a stable, fair environment where small businesses and farmers can thrive. House Bill 198 is the tough but fair solution we need to accomplish our common goals.

Members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 198. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

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