



Senator Steve Huffman
5th District
House Judiciary Committee
April 30, 2025
Senate Bill 56

Chair Thomas and members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 56, which seeks to streamline administration of Ohio's marijuana programs and address several public safety concerns.

Many of the provisions in the bill may look familiar, as they largely reflect what the Senate passed in HB 86 last General Assembly. First, the bill merges Ohio's medical and adult-use marijuana programs under the Division of Cannabis Control, which voters recently established with the passage of issue 2. Consolidating both programs under the Division will allow for consistent requirements regarding testing, packaging, labeling, and advertising, especially those related to protecting children. It also provides for streamlined licensing standards and general compliance procedures, cutting down on bureaucracy, red tape, and government waste. It is important to note that the bill ensures those entities who were issued licenses under issue 2 maintain their licenses, as many have already been granted and are operational.

The bill also addresses several public safety concerns such as banning public smoking, prohibiting driving while the driver or any passenger is using marijuana, and ensuring homegrown marijuana is not grown at residences that operate in-home childcare programs. SB 56 respects that voters wanted home grow but sets a more reasonable limitation of 6 plants per household. Further, the bill clarifies the ability of local law enforcement to investigate alleged violations and harmonizes employer protections regarding drug-free workplace policies.

Unlike the as introduced version of this bill, this passed version would keep the excise tax on adult-use marijuana at 10% that was included in the initiated statute. The substitute bill that was added no longer addresses tax or revenue distributions and only adopts policy changes, given the current budget deliberations.

SB 56 also includes the same expungement language that the Senate previously supported in HB 86, whereby any Ohioan who has previously been convicted of a marijuana

possession charge for an amount that is now legal under Issue 2 and SB 56 may have the conviction expunged upon application to the court. Funding is not currently included, as the Senate intends to consider revenue changes during budget proceedings.

In short, this bill is about government efficiency, consumer and child safety, and maintaining access to voter-approved adult-use marijuana.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions.