



U.S. Hemp  
Roundtable

info@hempsupporter.com | Washington D.C. | @hemproundtable

## **Testimony in Support of House Bill 198**

**Jonathan Miller, General Counsel  
U.S. Hemp Roundtable  
April 30, 2025**

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and members of the Ohio House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jonathan Miller, and I am the General Counsel for the U.S. Hemp Roundtable. Thank you for the opportunity to offer our organization's support for House Bill 198.

The U.S. Hemp Roundtable is a coalition of more than 100 leading companies and organizations in Ohio and across the country committed to safe hemp and CBD products. We advocate for science-driven, equitable, and inclusive law and regulation for hemp industries – including agriculture, oilseed, fiber, and extracts such as CBD – to produce a reliable, sustainable supply chain of responsible commerce.

Our association was deeply involved in the development of the 2018 U.S. Farm Bill that legalized hemp and the sale of hemp products, and then the effort in Ohio to similarly change state law in 2019.

We seek your support to continue to allow hemp products to be sold here in Ohio as they have been for years in businesses large and small throughout the state. Consumer demand continues to grow, and new products, such as hemp-infused beverages, have entered the market at a fast pace.

We seek to support and maintain Ohio's hemp industry, most especially Ohio's retail and small business communities that currently benefit from the sale of hemp products. Other proposals that would ban hemp products or place them exclusively in marijuana dispensaries (a de facto ban) would harm, and likely jeopardize, businesses whose entire brick-and-mortar operations are based on the sale of legal hemp products today.

For several years, the Roundtable has continuously called for regulation of the industry, both in Washington and in each of the states, to preserve it and help it thrive. We support stronger enforcement against violators, licensing for manufacturers and sellers, independent testing of hemp products, adequate labeling that prohibits child-enticing images, and age restrictions on the sale of hemp-derived consumable products.



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We are grateful that Representatives Tex Fischer and Ty Mathews see regulation as a viable path instead of bans or other access limitations, and we applaud their efforts to keep hemp products accessible for consumers. Robust regulation is clearly preferable to misguided prohibition in ensuring that products are safe and kept out of the hands of minors.

We stand ready to work with the legislature on developing policy with meaningful hemp product regulation and appropriate age limitations. Strict bans will only support illicit sales of these products, with no enforceable safety or age requirements, which does nothing to address the issues legislators have cited as the need for new hemp legislation.

One item we would like to see changed in future versions of the bill is the direct-to-consumer beverage sale language, which currently prohibits such sales. Many of our hemp producers are small businesses that rely on selling their products online, so it is essential that this sales channel remain open to protect a free and competitive hemp market. We respectfully ask for support of a change in the bill to allow direct sales of beverage products to consumers.

In order to prevent the sale and distribution to individuals under the age of 21, we recommend a number of precautions, including requiring the seller to verify the purchaser's age, mandating that the credit/debit card used must be in the purchaser's name, and prohibiting payments made in cash or money orders. The U.S. Hemp Roundtable strongly endorses a strict framework for age verification and is providing language to the sponsors for consideration.

Overall, HB 198 offers the strong regulatory approach to the sale of hemp products that we have been seeking for several years. This is the best path forward for businesses and consumers alike; it preserves the hemp industry and allows it to continue to provide safe and valued products to Ohio consumers.

Thank you for your consideration. We welcome further discussion on regulating hemp products.

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