

Chairman Thomas, Ranking Member Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn and all members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Eyad Moreb. I am the co-founder of Moreb Wholesale and the director of the Ohio Healthy Alternative Association. OHAA is an organization of hemp retailers, wholesalers and manufactures who are committed to advocating for policies that ensure hemp is safe, but accessible. House Bill 198 takes that thoughtful approach.

First, I want to thank you, and I want to thank the great nation of America — a country that gave me, as an immigrant, the opportunity to become an entrepreneur in a free market. For me, the hemp industry is more than just a business — it's personal, just like it is for so many others who are part of it.

I am here today to urge you to regulate hemp products in a free market model, not under a monopoly-based system like the marijuana dispensary model. Marijuana interest want to eliminate the hemp market to their benefit, leaving thousands of Ohioans jobless — while the 165 dispensaries currently operating are owned largely by out-of-state companies.

Meanwhile, we are Ohio-based and Ohio-operated companies, hiring local workers, investing in local farming, building housing, and contributing to our communities every day.

There has also been misinformation about intoxicating hemp, trying to link it to dangerous drugs coming from China or elsewhere. But let's be clear: hemp, under the right regulation with the right enforcement, is safe.

Keeping kids safe from adult products is a matter of education, parenting, and enforcement — not by banning federally legal products from responsible adults, which only hands business over to out-of-state websites and the illicit market.

Today, hemp products are sold in local retailers, like smoke shops that are already licensed to sell alcohol and tobacco products. If these businesses have strict 21+ age limits for those products, why would we treat hemp differently?

When an adult buys marijuana from a dispensary, how does that keep kids away any more than buying liquor from a liquor store, beer from a gas station, or prescription drugs from a pharmacy? Those products come home too — yet we trust adults to be responsible.

Ohio's best path forward is to regulate the hemp industry fairly — to let our businesses invest, innovate, and grow in every part of this amazing American-made industry.

The hemp plant has over 25,000 uses and regulating it properly would allow Ohio to attract

investors to build labs, factories, distribution centers, and farming operations — creating new jobs, new tax revenue, and new opportunities for our state.

I urge you — as leaders of Ohio — to step ahead of the game. Let's support Ohio businesses, grow our economy, and help fight the real drug crisis — by regulating hemp responsibly and keeping opportunity alive in our communities.

Thank you for your consideration and I urge you to support HB 198.