

Tiffany Startup

Cannabis Consumer, Industry Worker and Advocate

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Testimony on *HB160 and HB198*

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Issacson and members of the committee, Thank You for the opportunity to provide Opponent testimony today on House Bill 160. My name is Tiffany Startup and I am writing to you as a concerned consumer of cannabis and hemp products. I cannot be there in person today but have felt I need to voice my concerns and ideas. I am a patient, work at a processing facility and am an advocate for Cannabis use. The culture of Cannabis is one of compassion, creativity, community and sharing. We are NOT criminals. We don't want to be criminals.

In section HB 160 Section 3793.04 (B) page 37 says "No person shall give, sell, or transfer homegrown marijuana to any other person, with or without remuneration." This seems excessive to me. I believe we should be able to share our plants with others. Just like my neighbor gives me tomatoes and basil every summer. Sharing is part of the cannabis Community. Some of the best medicine can come from a home grow, and not everyone has the skills to grow their own. If my grandmother can't take opiates and finds relief from cannabis that I can grow for her and make into edibles I should be able to do that without the risk of going to jail. Therefore, I feel it would be wise to offer a craft cannabis license or a caregiver type license. Consume at your own risk. Kind of like Cottage Laws for food. This should also apply to hemp and not just delta 9 THC cannabis. If testing the product is an issue, maybe we can create new jobs by having consumer testing labs in each county so that consumers and small batch producers can have their product tested. There are already people doing this making great products that follow the packaging guidelines already established in the legal market. They are even getting the products tested. This Consumer testing lab could even bring the product into Metrc to be tracked and tested if necessary. We are already doing something similar in processing facilities with hemp derived cannabinoids by creating Metrc packaged without a source/external transfer. This was established on 12/02/2024 by the Division of Cannabis Control. We could use the cannabis taxes to help fund the cannabis cottage law/caregiver program/craft grow program. There are a detail that would need to be ironed out which is why I think voting against HB 160 and HB 198 is necessary. We need to establish a panel of Cannabis industry professionals both legal and legacy to figure out a way that everyone can be happy and benefit from the joys of cannabis. We need to have compassion for cannabis not criminalization.

Section 3796.05 Limits the number of dispensaries to 350. That's barely 4 dispensaries per county. There are plenty of holistic health shops and CBD shops that are operating legally, effectively and efficiently. We need to protect these already established businesses. If we are going to limit the number of dispensaries then how can these places stay open? If you want all hemp and cannabis to go through dispensaries, then how is limiting the number going to help? We should be making obtaining a license to sell and produce cannabis and hemp more affordable. The Legacy market has been around longer than the Legal and they are not going to go away. There is room for everyone in this industry.

Section 3796.06 Prohibits the smoking or combustion of medical cannabis and limits it to privately owned residences. We all know that people have been smoking cannabis for decades in parks, at concerts etc. I really think we need to leave it up to the place of business to decide if they want to allow consumption of cannabis or not. People are allowed to smoke cigarettes anywhere outside, which are proven to be super deadly and cause a plethora of health issues. Cigarettes are also extremely difficult to quit. Cannabis doesn't have the same kind of addiction. I know because I use both. I can quit cannabis with no issues from time to time. Cannabis has helped remove my need for any prescription medications. I used to be on 4 antidepressants and 2 pain killers. I don't need them anymore because of cannabis. I had a major back surgery in 2021 and used Only a full spectrum cannabis oil called RSO for pain relief. This RSO also helped me heal "faster than anyone he has ever see" according to my Dr. I have struggled immensely with quitting tobacco. Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death! I feel that I could use hemp and cannabis to help me get off tobacco, but don't want to go to jail for doing so. I get that smoking in general is bad, but smoking a joint is the fastest way to get the relief I need from cannabis. I shouldn't feel like a criminal for doing so. It would be great to see cannabis consumption lounges or cannabis coffee shops where we can use and share our cannabis. We should leave cannabis consumption up to a place of business. Most cannabis users are responsible and don't even drink, but we don't currently have anywhere else that we can hang out, consumer together and talk about this amazing plant.

I agree that "Adult-use marijuana and medical marijuana shall not be dispensed or sold in a form or shape that bears the likeness or contains the characteristics of a realistic or fictional human, animal, or fruit, including artistic, caricature, or cartoon renderings." Why then are we allowing alcohol to be sold in gas stations and grocery stores that does appeal to children. One example is Welch's Vodka Transfusion. Welch's has kids as their mascots! Arizona Spiked tea, Monster energy drinks with alcohol, etc. These are all names that kids know and love and now we are putting booze in them and making them entice children. No one is purposefully or intentionally promoting cannabis products to children, nor do we want to. Alcohol is a huge problem in Ohio. According to Ohio.gov Alcohol

contributes to 40% of traffic fatalities in Ohio. Cannabis can help people with addictions to alcohol and other drugs. I have lost several family members to alcohol and prescription pills over the past few years. I have never lost anyone to cannabis. The kids that are having adverse reactions to cannabis are getting it from the gas stations or shady smoke shops. They are not getting it from the Ohio Dispensaries or the Ohio Legacy market.

The Cannabis community in Ohio is amazing. I have met so many talented, creative, professional people from all walks of life. I have gained wisdom and knowledge about cannabis, people, community and myself from having cannabis in my life. I have experienced amazing music, art and so much compassion come from this industry. I highly suggest voting no on these bills, gathering up a team of Cannabis professionals and rethinking how we can make the cannabis market successful in Ohio. I think we should pull these professionals from groups like Industry Leaders Unite, The Cannabis Consumer Coalition of Ohio, Medicate Ohio, Hocking College and the average consumer. We all voted for cannabis freedom not Cannabis Criminalization.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide an Opponent testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have through email, phone or Instagram.

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