

Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I come before you today as a small business owner and Ohioan, deeply committed to the growth and integrity of our local hemp industry. The issue before us is time-sensitive and demands immediate legislative action. However, it is crucial that the measures we pass do not inadvertently harm the very industry Ohio has the potential to benefit from. Senate Bill 56 (SB56) poses a direct threat to the survival of small businesses like mine, and, ultimately, to the consumers who rely on these products for relief. Rather than restricting access to hemp products and pushing Ohio's small businesses out of work, we need a regulatory framework that ensures these products remain accessible while prioritizing public health and safety.

My husband and I have invested our life savings into our business, and our family depends on it for survival. We are a manufacturer and distributor based here in Ohio, and the impact of SB56, as currently written, would be devastating. If hemp products are pushed into dispensaries, we, along with many other manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, and shops, will be excluded from the industry. Dispensaries require a multitude of licenses that small businesses like ours simply do not have the resources or ability to obtain. Large, multi-state companies are coming into Ohio, forcing small businesses out and monopolizing the industry. These companies focus on marijuana, not hemp, and will have no interest in continuing to produce delta products. This will essentially wipe out the market for these products in Ohio, and small businesses will lose everything.

One of the most concerning provisions of SB56 is the proposal to move hemp products into dispensaries. While some consumers may feel comfortable purchasing from dispensaries, this would alienate a large portion of the consumer base. There is a significant stigma surrounding dispensaries, particularly among older clientele. For many, the experience of walking into a dispensary is intimidating or undesirable. They currently rely on easily accessible hemp products sold in convenience stores, gas stations, and smoke shops. If SB56 passes as it is, the market for these products will essentially disappear, forcing many small businesses to close their doors. This legislation would cripple an entire industry and lead to the widespread loss of small businesses that depend on hemp products as their main source of income.

I am also deeply concerned about the impact this legislation would have on the manufacturing side of our industry. If hemp products are moved into dispensaries, who will manufacture them? Will it be the same multi-billion-dollar marijuana companies that produce marijuana gummies? By doing so, we are effectively handing control of the industry over to these large corporations, sidelining small businesses like ours, and monopolizing the market. Ohio's small businesses will be forced out, and companies that didn't even start here in Ohio will dominate the industry.

If Ohio passes this legislation as written, it will not eliminate demand for these products—it will drive consumers to the black market. People will still seek out delta products, but they will turn

to unsafe, unregulated sources. Not only will this put public health at risk, but individuals may begin manufacturing these products in unregulated environments or at home, compounding the danger. This is the very type of underground activity Ohio's regulatory framework should be designed to prevent.

Ohio's small businesses trusted that our state would protect us. The actions outlined in SB56 would harm those of us who have been committed to doing things the right way—investing in our communities and operating with transparency and responsibility. If this legislation passes, Ohio will lose thousands of small businesses, and the market will be controlled by a few massive companies that did not originate in Ohio.

I urge you to reconsider the provisions of SB56 that would drive Ohio's small businesses out of the industry. Instead of placing restrictions that would harm both businesses and consumers alike, Ohio should focus on creating a regulatory framework that allows responsible sales of hemp products while ensuring they remain accessible to customers. This is not about banning the product—it's about regulating it, enforcing those regulations, and protecting the livelihoods of small business owners.

What Ohio needs is regulation, not prohibition. We need a framework that allows for responsible sales of hemp products, ensuring that only adults 21 and older can purchase them. Packaging should be regulated to prevent it from appealing to children (such as banning cartoon characters), and proper health warnings should be included. The key here is not banning the products but establishing and enforcing common-sense regulations to protect consumers and businesses alike.

My company is a manufacturer here in Ohio, and we source our hemp from a lab in Colorado that complies with Ohio laws and provides full-panel testing, ensuring that we are doing everything we can to uphold the integrity of this industry. I would like to extend an invitation for you to tour our facility, where you can witness firsthand how the entire manufacturing and distribution process operates.

In conclusion, I urge you and your colleagues to reconsider the provisions of SB56 that would negatively impact hemp businesses in Ohio. Rather than placing restrictions that will ultimately harm both businesses and consumers, we need to create a regulated environment that ensures the safety and well-being of all involved.

Thank you for your time and consideration

*CC Brown*

Invicta Nutraceuticals

KWI Distribution