

Opponent Testimony on Senate Bill 56  
Submitted to the Ohio House of Representatives  
By Rodney “Hash” Hennessey Jr.  
Hearing Date: Wednesday, June 4, 2025  
Location: Ohio Statehouse

Chairman, Vice Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in opposition to Senate Bill 56. Despite the recent amendments, this bill still undermines much of what Ohio voters overwhelmingly supported in passing Issue 2.

My name is Rodney Hennessey, but most people in the cannabis space know me as Rodney Hash. I’ve worked in every part of the cannabis industry—from cultivation and extraction to retail and education. I currently help lead the Ohio Cannabis Consumer Coalition, representing a diverse group of Ohioans from across the political spectrum. This is not a partisan issue. And the people voted for progress—not a return to prohibition.

SB 56 contains several concerning provisions. Most notably, it continues to favor existing operators, giving them more grow space, while shutting out new, small-scale entrepreneurs. One of the promises of Issue 2 was equity—giving the “little guy” a chance. But unless you’re already a millionaire, there’s no realistic path into the legal market. Ohioans are calling for the cannabis equivalent of a craft brewery license. If we truly want to combat the illegal market, then invite those operators to go legal. Give them a fair shot. Let them pay taxes, follow the rules, and contribute.

The bill also creates unnecessary new crimes—such as making it a criminal offense to hit a vape pen as a passenger in a car. We are tired of being treated like criminals for something voters have clearly chosen to normalize and regulate.

Additionally, combining the recreational and medical programs without separate testing standards or patient protections is a mistake. Patients are being hurt by this approach. They deserve better.

Finally, limiting the number of dispensaries makes no sense—especially when cities like Cleveland saw their first real drop in opioid deaths in decades just after recreational access began in late 2024. This isn’t just correlation—it’s proven causation. Wherever legal cannabis becomes more accessible, opioid-related deaths decrease. This has been seen in state after state, and now, right here in Ohio.

These are just a few of the many concerns we have with this bill. I welcome any questions you have, and would be honored to sit down with members of this committee for more in-depth conversations. I also host a podcast and would love to create space for an open, respectful dialogue on this issue with you.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Rodney "Hash" Hennessey Jr.  
Ohio Cannabis Consumer Coalition