

Testimony in Opposition to SB56 Sub Bill

Good morning Chairman Thomas, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and members of the committee.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

I respectfully oppose the SB56 Sub Bill for the following reasons and offer improvements:

We must protect our most vulnerable-seniors, veterans, cancer patients, and people like me living with serious health conditions. Medical cannabis patients should not be taxed. Removing taxes could help bring back thousands who've left the program.

Medical patients should be allowed to smoke cannabis. It makes no sense that adult-use consumers can smoke but patients can't. If THC limits are reduced, high-potency products should remain available for medical use.

We must stop criminalizing how cannabis is stored in vehicles. No jail time or fines. Products should be stored where kids or pets can't reach them, like in a sealed or childproof container. Smell alone should not justify a search.

Cannabis consumption spaces are long overdue. If Ohio is considering allowing THC beverages to be sold in bars and restaurants, we should also consider designated areas at these venues where adults can legally smoke cannabis. Just like we have bars for alcohol, cannabis consumers need safe, legal spaces to consume. I propose we establish a system of event-based and venue-specific permits that allow smoking or vaping at approved private events or consumption-friendly businesses.

Cannabis event rules need clarity. I propose venue-based and annual event permits issued by the Division of Cannabis Control. Clear rules will support legal, safe, and successful events.

Home growers should be permitted to sell seeds and clones at expos, festivals, and markets. Medical patients should be allowed to grow 12 plants per person. Selling a small number of clones without a license should be permitted; selling more could require a vendor permit.

I propose we rename the social equity program to the Cannabis Opportunity and Community Program (COCP). This program should receive 26% of adult-use sales to support licensing access, job creation, expungement, and community reinvestment. COCP could be managed by the Ohio Department of Development.

An additional 10% of adult-use sales should support public cannabis education, local testing access, and law enforcement retraining on cannabis laws and Division of Cannabis Control policies.

I would like to launch the Cannabis Public Education Program, CPEP, with the support and funding of the state. CPEP would serve cannabis consumers and non-licensed businesses by providing multi-language, multimedia education to close the gap in public understanding.

Public cannabis testing should be offered at health departments so residents can test flower, edibles, or concentrates from any source, reducing stigma and promoting safety.

Ohio voters are frustrated. Many people across the state have different understandings of what is and isn't legal when it comes to cannabis, because public information has been inconsistent - and laws often feel different depending on what city or county you're in. I urge you to attend cannabis town halls this summer to connect with voters. If we don't get this right, we'll keep losing to Michigan,

in football and in cannabis.

Thank you. I'm happy to answer your questions or meet at another time.