



U.S. Hemp
Roundtable

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Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 56

Jonathan Miller, General Counsel

U.S. Hemp Roundtable

Chairman Thomas, Vice Chair Matthews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn and members of the Ohio House Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in opposition to the hemp provisions contained in SB 56 which removes access to almost all hemp products and generally makes them only available for sale in the limited number of marijuana dispensaries. Moving hemp products under the marijuana regulatory system is, for all practical purposes, a ban by another name, and it will shutter businesses whose owners sought to invest in a new industry that this legislature created in 2019 following federal hemp legalization.

Retailers throughout Ohio will be severely and negatively impacted by adopting this type of policy with CBD/hemp product stores having no ability to enter the monopolistic world of marijuana dispensary licensing. These CBD store owners have repeatedly offered testimony in support of regulation of their industry, recognizing that we need to address concerns about underage use and the like. However, they have also shared that their customers are typically over the age of 55 and looking for natural relief and wellness options without the intoxicating effects of marijuana. Their customers want to visit a trusted local retailer for hemp products and are not likely to visit a dispensary with customers seeking a high.

It is important to keep in mind that hemp products are legal under federal law while marijuana is not. The legal implications of forcing hemp products to be sold by marijuana dispensaries haven't all been fully explored, but significant questions remain as to the ability for states to limit access in such a manner.

The U.S. Hemp Roundtable is committed to safe hemp and CBD products. We have long supported self-regulation of the industry, and prefer the reforms outlined in an alternative bill, HB 198, which include stronger enforcement against violators, licensing for manufacturers and sellers, independent testing of hemp products, adequate labeling which prohibits child-enticing images, and age restrictions on the sale of hemp-derived consumable products.



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As to hemp beverages, the Roundtable is supportive of the effort to include a retail exception for hemp beverages in SB 56, but the THC limits and restrictions on avenues for sales and consumption will injure this growing segment of the industry.

We respectfully submit that a strong regulatory approach to hemp products, without bans, is the best path to address the legislature's goals, and it is also best for the preservation of hemp-related businesses, hemp product sales, and consumer choice.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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