

Hello General State Committee,

My name is Alex Pagán, I'm a cannabis user and craft grower, and I'm here to express my opposition to Senate Bill 56. I'd like to start by telling you that this plant has helped me tremendously in life. I have ADHD in the 98th percentile, I take my prescribed medication M-F for work, and on my own time I use cannabis to help focus and calm my brain, so that I may use my condition more as a superpower as I like to call it. I've just recently had surgery in which I would have been lost in a bottle of pills without being able to use cannabis for the immense discomfort I have been in these past 12 days. I believe that allowing responsible adult consumption of cannabis in designated public spaces can bring significant economic benefits to Ohio. Think about the potential revenue from events and festivals, and the creation of new businesses, such as lounges, or clubs that specialize in cannabis, rather than alcohol. Cincinnati's 'Designated Outdoor Refreshment Areas' is a great example of how allowing public consumption can boost tourism and bring in revenue. We could see similar benefits with cannabis.

I also want to emphasize the importance of Tier 3 licenses, which would support craft cannabis growers and producers. This would not only create opportunities for small businesses and promote a diverse cannabis market in Ohio, but it would also likely drive more consumers into dispensaries, such as myself and other like-minded individuals, generating additional revenue for the state.

Additionally, I believe that restricting public consumption infringes on the personal freedoms of responsible adults. We trust adults to make decisions about alcohol consumption, and I believe we should extend that same trust to cannabis. I don't understand how someone can smoke a cigarette, or a cigar in a public space, but I can't even go to the furthest corner of the parking lot, out of respect for others mind you, and smoke a joint. The criminalizing feel of this bill is extremely off-putting, and through dialogue, such as today, I hope you can learn to better understand us, we're not a bunch of criminals trying to get kids high, or cause riff-raff, we're normal, every day people like you, or anyone else. Whereas you may end your night with a glass of scotch, bourbon, wine, or even a beer to wind down and decompress, I smoke a joint. In all reality, what's the difference? In all reality the person that has an alcoholic beverage at night, knowingly or not, is using that beverage as medication to calm the body and relax the mind, cannabis helps me the same.