

Kyle Coates

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Opposing Testimony for Sub SB 56

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide Opponent Testimony on Substitute Senate Bill 56. My name is Kyle Coates. I am a member of Ohio Cannabis Consumer Coalition and I am here today to provide testimony not only on my behalf, but with the coalition as well. You have or will have heard several arguments against Sub SB 56 from my fellow Coalition members, and I hope from multiple angles for maximum understanding of our position on the subject. I will try to utilize the time given to me to discuss a few things that matter to me personally and possibly highlight a different angle than my colleagues at the same time.

I am a father of young children and right now a few of them are old enough to understand political motion. It has become harder to navigate conversations with them about the subject because Politics can be so tricky to begin with. I want my children to understand how to be an active member of their community while truly making an impact, so they are not kept in the dark on many subjects. Kids say what comes to mind and they are always quick to notice when something isn't right. Well how do you defend the legislative process when it is failing to perform as designed? It becomes much harder to foster their concept of Democracy for their future when it is apparent that the fight to retain Democracy is alive and real in present times.

It has been stated that Ohioans may not really have known what they initially voted for with Issue 2. One thing that has been made clear by many Ohioans thus far, by my observation, is that we did, in fact, know well what we voted for. Senate Bill 56, Substitute Senate Bill 56, or any other Bill containing language inherently opposite of the language passed within Issue 2, is blatantly pushing against the will of the majority. It is concerning that someone finds it necessary to further regulate what is already strictly regulated enough. The current rules and regulations are what were passed with Issue 2, and any further modifications should be considered by the People when, or if, they find it necessary.

I have been using Cannabis for relief for the entirety of the time I have used it. For 25 years I have self medicated using Cannabis for physical, mental, and spiritual relief. I am fortunate for the path that led me to be able to use Cannabis as medicine and I wish that ability for everyone that desires it. I have

been an Ohio Medical Cannabis patient for six years but I've let the registration lapse due to current circumstances. I'm not too sure how I feel going back to having to jump through more hoops and pay to be in a system when it's been deemed that it is in fact medicine I am procuring and anyone without a medical card can get the same thing with less hoops, just a few more tax dollars. Shouldn't patients come first being as they are the real backbone of the medical program. Without patients there would have been no need for a medical program. It would be amazing to be able to find a way to facilitate a real Caregiver system within Ohio's medical program. Something that only patients had access to that also gave independent growers and other patients the ability to enter into the conversation while fostering a cleaner, more accountable environment as a whole.

Ultimately, it appears that the real issue is, as in most cases, the money, and how to spend the money. Any and all tax monies generated from business done by licensed operators of any kind should be efficiently used for impactful enrichment of the community where the business is done. There should be zero cap on time that revenue is allotted to municipalities as they will always need extra funds from all feasible sources. I completely disagree with a Universal Marijuana Permit, as it appears to be another arbitrary list and fee/fine generation tool. It just adds more items to an already large bill. Any legal age person should be able to trade, gift, share Cannabis. All legal age Ohioans should be able to register for licensing for growing, processing, and/or distribution if they desire and have the capacity to do so.

The apparent merging of SB 56 and language from SB 86 is a large area of concern as its rushed introduction appears to indicate a general lack of forethought on both. If "intoxicating" hemp is the real issue, shift the focus to Natural vs. Synthetic. Focus on the use of Natural Ohio Grown Hemp. Foster Ohio Agriculture by way of Hemp. The reality is we should be discussing decriminalization instead of legalization of Cannabis and Hemp altogether. For the plain fact we gather to discuss nuances to topics that were completely off the table less than a decade ago, we should soon recognize the absurdity of the demonization and over regulation of a plant that provides relief in many forms for a multitude of peoples. Although there have been obvious compromises made within the original bill language, I'll say it again, any language against the language passed within Issue 2 is against the will of the majority of OHIO.

Thank you for your time, I'm happy to answer any questions.

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