

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 included in SB 56.

As a small business owner operating a Sunmed | Your CBD Store in Bellefontaine, Ohio. I am deeply concerned about the devastating fiscal impact this bill would have on responsible hemp retailers like myself and the communities we serve. SB 56 would effectively ban the sale of nearly all hemp-derived products from stores like mine by restricting access exclusively to licensed marijuana dispensaries. While this may not be labeled a ban outright, the real-world result is the same: closure of compliant, law-abiding small businesses across the state.

When the Ohio Legislature legalized hemp in 2019 following the federal Farm Bill, entrepreneurs like me made significant investments in launching storefronts, building customer trust, and creating jobs. We've followed the law and advocated for reasonable regulation, including age restrictions, testing, labeling requirements, and enforcement against bad actors. But SB 56 doesn't regulate our industry, it dismantles it.

By forcing hemp products with even trace amounts of THC into dispensaries, the state is unfairly picking winners and losers, rewarding marijuana operators while shutting out hundreds of small, local businesses that serve a very different customer base.

The majority of my customers are older adults, often over the age of 55, seeking natural alternatives for wellness, sleep, or pain relief. and are not interested in getting high.

There is a better path. I urge the Committee to consider the approach taken in HB 198, which responsibly regulates hemp without dismantling the industry. That bill includes age restrictions, licensing, product testing, child-resistant packaging, and truth-in-labeling, which is the start of a robust framework to help protect consumers while preserving access and fairness.

In closing, please understand: SB 56 doesn't just regulate hemp, it bans it from responsible small businesses like mine that have played by the rules, supported our communities, and provided safe, effective products to Ohioans who depend on them.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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