

## **Testimony - Elizabeth Dubinin In Opposition to SB56**

### **Honorable Members of the Committee,**

My name is Elizabeth Dubinin, and I would like to speak today against SB56. As a sales representative for a hemp company, I have the privilege of interacting with many business owners, their employees, and customers across the state.

To be honest, when I first started this job, it was just an exciting opportunity for a career change. What I didn't anticipate was witnessing the profound impact this industry has on people's everyday lives. Hemp products are not a luxury—they are a lifeline for thousands of Ohioans.

Banning intoxicating hemp products is not just a policy decision—it's a moral one. It prioritizes the profits of large corporations over the livelihoods of small business owners, employees, and families. Ohioans want affordable, safe access to hemp products and want their local businesses to stay open!

SB56 doesn't just threaten businesses—it threatens people.

Last week I spoke with a mother of six who uses hemp to help manage symptoms of her health condition. She told me, in the past, she had to take prescription medication that was so strong she wasn't able to get out of bed. I don't know about you, but imagine having 6 children relying on you and your options are a medication that leaves you unable to work, drive, and take care of your children OR hemp. I think that decision would be easy for anyone. Her story is not unique. It's one of hundreds if not thousands. Hemp products offer a safe and affordable alternative to countless Ohioans managing pain, anxiety, depression, and other serious health challenges.

If SB56 passes, many of these people will lose access to affordable products that improve the quality of their life and their families. Restricting hemp sales to dispensaries is NOT the answer. Personally, I think it sounds like a disaster waiting to happen. Let me explain. The state of Ohio has over 11 million people across its 88 counties. Can you guess how many of those counties do not have a single dispensary? 30 of them. 30 counties do not have a single dispensary. What happens to the thousands of people across these 30 counties when they need access? SB56 is not a realistic solution. Many people I know cannot afford dispensary prices or simply don't have transportation. ESPECIALLY in rural and underserved areas. These communities rely on their local businesses to provide them with a safe place to purchase their hemp products that they otherwise would not have access to.

Worse yet, many of these people would be forced to turn to the unregulated black market, putting their health and safety at risk. Ohio's hemp businesses are operating in compliance with federal laws. Ironically enough, most products sold in a licensed dispensary are federally illegal. Please explain to me how businesses following the law are the same ones being targeted and pushed out of their own industry? Make that make sense.

This bill is not just SB56 prioritizes the profits of a few over the livelihoods and wellbeing of thousands of Ohioans. It will take money directly out of the hands of small businesses, employees, and their families and funnel it into large corporations that are frankly unable to serve the needs of all Ohians across the state that rely on these products.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony. When you make your decision, I beg you to think of the thousands of people you represent and how your decision will impact their lives, families, and communities. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Dubinin