



*BEFORE THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
OPPONENT TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 56*

Chairman Thomas and members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on Senate Bill 56 (SB 56). My name is Robert Zora and I am testifying on behalf of Wild Bill's Tobacco.

Wild Bill's is the nation's second largest tobacco retailer with more than 230 stores across Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana, including 45 Ohio stores. We employ more than 1,000 people nationwide and the company prides itself in operating high quality retail establishments that are clean, safe, and community assets.

Unique among its peers, Wild Bill's Tobacco prohibits anyone under the age of 21 from entering our stores. We require every patron to show a valid identification at the point of sale, and we provide robust training to our store's employees to assure compliance with all state and local regulations.

Wild Bill's currently opposes Senate Bill 56 because it will negatively impact our operations by prohibiting the sale of otherwise lawful hemp products. The legislation's prohibition on the sale of "intoxicating hemp products" extends to nearly every hemp product we sell at retail and fails to consider how our stores vary from other hemp retailers.

The legislation's prohibition also diminishes consumer choice and encourages an illicit marijuana marketplace because certain hemp products are often times an alternative to purchasing marijuana from dispensaries since the cost of their products are unaffordable for many people.

Despite our opposition to Senate Bill 56, Wild Bill's supports more stringent regulations on intoxicating hemp products. Regulations limiting the sale of these products to Ohioans over the age of 21, prohibiting packaging that targets minors, and requiring additional product testing will reduce access to the products by children while assuring Ohio's hemp marketplace is safe for adult consumers.

Regulating the product will also avoid any potential negative economic consequences stemming from Senate Bill 56 since retailers across the state will maintain their ability to sell lawful products that have consumer demand. Similarly, regulating the product will also maintain Ohio's economic competitiveness for hemp retailers since the vast majority of states allow for the sale of all varieties of hemp products.

In closing, Wild Bill's urges this Committee to reject Senate Bill 56 and instead consider alternative legislation that promotes economic competitiveness and an adult-only marketplace that is safe for consumers.