

**Ohio 136TH General Assembly
House Judiciary Committee
SB56 Opponent Testimony
May 21, 2025**

Chairman Thomas, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn and members of the House Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present opponent testimony before you today regarding SB56, an anti cannabis bill that would place Ohio back into a “New Era of Cannabis Prohibition” creating laws criminalizing the cannabis community and endangering the existence of Ohio’s current cannabis industry programs. A bill that dismisses the will of the Ohio people.

My name is Tim Johnson, I’m a retired Law Enforcement Officer, an Air Force Veteran and the President/Founder of Cannabis Safety First. I have spent the last ten years in the people's house as an Advocate, Legislative Advisor, Safety/Security Specialist and Subject Matter Specialist as a participant in creating Ohio’s medical cannabis program, hemp program and advising on Issue2 legislative rule packaging revision language.

SB56 presents as a redundant bill to the current rule packages of Issue2 still under construction, to rules currently in place for the medical cannabis program and hemp program. To share a few; child resistant and non attractive packaging already exist, no public consumption such as at ballparks exists and commonsense guidelines and guardrails have been implemented for industry standards, public safety and personal safety.

Jim Canepa, DCC, has and is doing a great job in promulgating rule packages by following the timeline of Issue2 which 2.2 million Ohion’s voted in favor of. There is no logical reason to interfere with this process or to interrupt its progress other than to introduce over regulation language from the social stigma and fear mongering lies of the cannabis community and industry.

The purpose of cannabis legalization is to reform cannabis criminalization laws, free up our courts and first responders, address decriminalization, address criminal justice reform, provide adult choice consumption and to provide an alternative healthcare choice for patients. SB56 presents as though the ORC 2925 chapter drug laws might as well be rewritten to further criminalize the cannabis community. Legalization is not legalization until consumers/patients are free from prosecution.

This bill was presented as a concern for public safety and to protect our children. If this is true and not for show then let's address the real issues of public safety and protect our children with sincerity by addressing the following;

- **Firearms, 40,000 deaths in 2024.**
- **Alcohol, 2700 permits in Ohio. Number 1 drug killer in the US.**
- **Tobacco, over 8 million deaths yearly. May kill you on the package.**
- **Melatonin, Killing children and adolescents, 11k ER visits in recent years.**
- **Caffeine, Powder forms and drinks with Ohio case precedents/death.**
- **Bullying, rampant in schools and community, depression kills.**
- **Mental challenges (depression), number 1 killer of adolescents.**

SB56 presents as a bill to enhance criminal penalties rather than to support the potential of a vibrant and sustainable new industry in Ohio creating jobs, companies and revenue.

SB56 tax proposal will only end in consumers and patients returning to the illicit market, back to personal cultivation, purchasing from the internet and driving to border states to purchase products eventually collapsing the Ohio industry licensees.

SB59 no firearm taxes and SB33/135thGA, 200 gallons moonshine per household, are in direct conflict with taxes and safety concerns and yet you entertain them.

Proponents;

Ohio Chamber of Commerce accepts membership from cannabis licensees, but believes the program needs more criminal enhanced penalties with higher taxes.

Prosecutors don't want to lose their asset seizure funds.

No proof of the abundance of illicit markets flooded with fentanyl.

Data shows teen use declines with legalization.

Arbitrary impaired driving laws. Where are stats from the last 50yrs.

The Doctor from Poison Control shared mistruths about children dying in Ohio from cannabis gummies in the house finance committee in 2024, could not produce documents.

In Safety,

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Credentials; Subject Matter Specialist, co-author of the white paper leading to HB523 Ohio's Medical Cannabis Program, testified before four other state GA's in creating their state cannabis program (2017-2018), patient advocate, veteran patient advocate, program advocate, legislative advisor, safety trainer, consultant in Ohio's medical and Adult Choice cannabis programs, and an ancillary safety and security specialist service provider. The last nine years I have followed the development, growth, SB/HB submissions and revisions to Ohio's programs. I have introduced the variance language, covid19 dispensary permissions language and introduced/adopted safety and security revision/amendment language to the programs

Resources;

☰ Hemp ACT 2025

☰ probable cause act 2025

☰ Ohio cannabis reform act 2025

☰ melatonin act 2025

☰ amend SB56 HB160 - 2025

☰ HB160 testimony 2025

<https://www.axios.com/local/cleveland/2025/02/06/ohios-woeful-anti-tobacco-spending>

<https://www.cleveland19.com/story/37970384/fda-bans-bulk-pure-caffeine-years-after-ohio-teens-deadly-overdose/>

<https://www.13abc.com/2024/06/27/clearing-up-confusion-about-marijuana-ovi-ohio/>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/kids-caffeine-dangerous-combination-study-suggests-n132536>

<https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/alcohol>

<https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/navigating-the-complexities-of-cannabis-3621905/>

<https://com.ohio.gov/about-us/media-center/news/online-resource-highlights-liquor-permit-renewal-process>

*** https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5208456 ***

<https://www.axios.com/local/cleveland/2025/02/06/ohios-woeful-anti-tobacco-spending>

<https://www.cleveland19.com/story/37970384/fda-bans-bulk-pure-caffeine-years-after-ohio-teens-deadly-overdose/>

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<https://com.ohio.gov/about-us/media-center/news/online-resource-highlights-liquor-permit-renewal-process>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1zxB3KFsS2fAJADc/?>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9xxd8w57kjo>

<https://tomo.com/blog/retail-marijuana-dispensaries-could-drive-higher-home-value/>

<https://www.marijuanamoment.net/youth-marijuana-use-in-colorado-continues-to-decline-since-legalization-took-effect-contradicting-prohibitionist-fears/>

<https://www.marijuanamoment.net/teen-marijuana-use-has-fallen-over-the-past-decade-as-more-states-enacted-legalization-new-cdc-report-shows/>

https://globalcannabinoidrc.com/gcrc-blog/f/mechoulam-2024-research-study-on-cannabinidiolic-acid-methyl-ester?fbclid=IwY2xjawl8KO5leHRuA2FlbQlxMQABHf9sbOT5xEvWIXeH3CO0LHW5r0ahB88jm_j8FTC8_8L5iQ1T2batqUhOqQ_aem_GxB_uqn-2SHNXzC60tTAWA

<https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/navigating-the-complexities-of-cannabis-3621905/>

https://cannabis.net/blog/opinion/over-32000-cannabis-studies-have-been-published-in-the-last-10-years-dispelling-the-myth-of-not?fbclid=IwAR2xQYGz8Hecml0Xfe_rBoBvYgriQXVV-jZ4PeGiO_4tjz3iNaih1VY9Vy4_aem_AQopkpSidkq1D4_VK6DccgVb-lqBu0tgtlGO-MYmKrQCl1TgQIJNfAwY_KMUZ-UBg

<https://www.nyam.org/175th/175th-timeline/mayor-laguardia-commissions-academy-report-marijuana-usage/>

<https://norml.org/news/2025/03/20/analysis-historic-drop-in-alcohol-sales-as-legal-cannabis-sales-spike/>

<https://apnews.com/article/michigan-marijuana-car-search-c7bdf15a4eada26a3c12a46cc4f07a98#>

<https://cedclinic.com/history-of-cannabis-oppression-and-stigma/>

<https://blog.omegastore.com/the-rise-of-cannabis-tourism-and-hospitality/>

<https://www.cleveland.com/news/2025/04/congressional-cannabis-caucus-co-chair-dave-joyce-proposes-federal-marijuana-reforms.html>

"It's unconscionable that states legalize something that people have been criminalized for and not make space at the table for those harmed by the war on cannabis."

"Should we not be releasing those in prison for selling cannabis before we license the rich to sell cannabis?"