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Cannabis Consumers Coalition - Member  
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## Testimony on SB56

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and All members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide Opponent Testimony on Senate Bill 56.

My name is Anastasia Muenz and I am a proud Buckeye. I was born and raised in Cincinnati, and came here to Columbus to attend THE Ohio State University. I graduated in 2023 as a Biological Engineer and a five year alumnus of The Best Damn Band In The Land. Professionally, I have over 5 years of experience in pharmaceuticals and clinical research. Since graduating, I have worked as a consulting engineer in food, biotech, and pharmaceutical manufacturing. I also am all too familiar with the inside of a hospital room. To keep it short, my time as a patient started as the classic 14 year old with a torn ACL. Soon after I developed chronic pain which resulted in another five surgeries, dozens of medications, and countless injections and procedures during most of my high school and college years. Since then I have learned to cope with my pain, and I have survived my medical traumas, thanks to the early years of the Ohio Cannabis Program.

In 2020, I was at the lowest point of my life. Not just because of the world pandemic and its effects, but also because of my chronic pain. In early fall, I was undergoing treatment to insert a spinal cord stimulator in an attempt to stop the pain, but the procedure failed. One of my nerves they were working near was knicked, so I didn't regain use of my right leg until 2 months after the procedure. While everyone was coming back out of quarantine, I was again stuck on the couch. I even missed being able to march with my band mates that season.

At the final follow up with that doctor, I was thankful that the numbness was temporary, but I still had constant pain in my knee. After years of orthopedic surgeons, physical therapy, five different pain management doctors, the best this doctor could offer was a prescription for Oxycodone. I have seen addiction through my family; we have lost family over it. My parents work in the pharmaceutical industry, so a prescription for opioids was never going to be an option. We know better. Thankfully, one of the physician assistants remained in the room and asked if I had ever tried weed? I hadn't, but I was certainly willing to try now. I knew it helped my uncle throughout his life, and my grandma beat breast cancer. But I thought of it as a drug and drugs were something I always stayed away from. Unless, there's a medical need.

Upon receiving my medical card in October 2020, I was able to go to the dispensary and get my first ever weed gummies! I went to The Botanist and the budtenders were extremely helpful. They were able to give me a product with 1:1 THC:CBD ratio, Watermelon Gummies by Butterfly Effect. I found that consistently taking a 1:1 product helped my pain stop all together, and allowed me to progress in physical therapy. It allowed me re-engage in school and life. It

helped me survive depression. And since then, I have been on a mission to learn everything about cannabis and understand why it helps me and billions of other people throughout time.

Now, I use daily to keep my chronic pain symptoms treated and my body more regulated. I have been recently diagnosed with dysautonomia as a result of my chronic pain syndrome. Just as my other physician prescribed medications are needed to regulate my blood pressure endocrine system, I use cannabis to regulate my body through my endocannabinoid system (ECS). Like other prescription medications, I titrate it down if a medical procedure requires it by reducing THC day by day up to one week prior to the procedure date. Then, no cannabis or hemp products the day before. Once the procedure is completed, I am able to start again as tolerated like any of my other medications. This is information I wish the state would provide to patients that need it, information that I have had to educate myself on over the years. My goal and hope is that education about cannabis uses, products, and functions are easily accessible to all.

The way I understand it as a biological engineer, is that the endocannabinoid system (ECS) is like a buffer between your body's tissues and the nervous system. The ECS regulates biological functions that send signals to your brain, and these receptors are found in tissues all over your body. Not only do we have the receptors to interact with cannabis, but we naturally create the chemical compounds, cannabinoids. You may have heard of them as THC, CBD, THCa, Delta 9 THC, etc. Note that Delta 8 THC and Delta 10 THC are CBD molecules that have been processed to "look" like THC to the body. Those two do not occur naturally in cannabis and should never be included in quality products. There are hundreds of biologically useful compounds that are in cannabis. As we all learned in basic chemistry, they can change form based on temperature. That is why I, like many people, pick different consumption times, methods, and dosages based on what symptoms I'm looking to alleviate.

As it pertains to this bill:

When I ride in the car as a passenger, I can get extremely car sick due to my dysautonomia. Being able to medicate is imperative if I am in the car for more than 20 minutes and having the ability to administer an appropriate dose for my ECS to regulate. I require inhalation as my dosing method for these symptoms, as edibles are processed differently in your body and product different effects than vaporization or combustion. Edibles don't give me the correct effects for the extreme nausea I feel from being the passenger in a car. But a "quick hit" of my full spectrum vape pen, with the right strain, will make this a non-problem. SB56 would make it illegal to travel comfortably with my family around our state.

I can become extremely overstimulated in a restaurant with loud noises, or having to sit in the same place for a long time can cause my pain to flare. It can be crucial for me to step outside a restaurant for a quick puff of my dry herb vape so I can go back and be present and able to participate with my husband for date night. SB56 would make it illegal.

I strongly oppose SB56, and encourage discussion and education within our legislator and our communities in cannabis. Aside from my experiences, there are many others who have suffered consequences from the legal system and deserve justice from the War on Drugs. The \$50 fee

for expungement should be removed from the language entirely. It is invasive to require such unless "indigent." People don't need their lives further interrupted by the legal system that was in the wrong in the first place. This is a plant that can be used to build the lives of people in our community, has scientific roots and diversity, and historical significance. SB56 disrespects all of that in re-criminalizing the functional use of cannabis.

Thank you very much for your time. I would be excited to answer any further questions, welcome any further conversation, or provide any further educational resources.

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