



**Senator Steve Huffman**  
**5<sup>th</sup> District**  
**Senate General Government Committee**  
**January 29, 2025**  
**Senate Bill 56**

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Chair Roegner and members of the Senate General Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 56, which seeks to streamline administration of Ohio's marijuana programs and address several public safety concerns.

Many of the provisions in the bill may look familiar, as they largely reflect what the Senate passed in HB 86 last General Assembly. First, the bill merges Ohio's medical and adult-use marijuana programs under the Division of Cannabis Control, which voters recently established with the passage of issue 2. Consolidating both programs under the Division will allow for consistent requirements regarding testing, packaging, labeling, and advertising, especially those related to protecting children. It also provides for streamlined licensing standards and general compliance procedures, cutting down on bureaucracy, red tape, and government waste. It is important to note that the bill ensures those entities who were issued licenses under issue 2 maintain their licenses, as many have already been granted and are operational.

The bill also addresses several public safety concerns such as banning public smoking, prohibiting driving while the driver or any passenger is using marijuana, and ensuring homegrown marijuana is not grown at residences that operate in-home childcare programs. Further, the bill clarifies the ability of local law enforcement to investigate alleged violations and harmonizes employer protections regarding drug-free workplace policies.

Much like what our chamber previously supported, SB 56 increases the excise tax on adult-use marijuana sales from 10 to 15%, but with revenue flowing to the GRF. The current 10% tax included in the initiated statute is among the lowest adult-use marijuana tax rates in the country and does not cover the societal costs of this newly legalized drug. I look forward to continued discussions on this component of the legislation.

In short, this bill is about government efficiency, consumer and child safety, and maintaining access to voter-approved adult-use marijuana.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions.