

# Opponent Testimony Against Ohio Senate Bill 56

**Presented by: Anthony D. Riley, Founder of Ohio Cannabis Live**

Honorable Members of the Ohio Senate General Government Committee,

My name is Anthony D. Riley, and I am here today to testify against Senate Bill 56 because it threatens key areas of Ohio's cannabis law, including Home Cultivation, Patient Rights & Consumer Protections, Taxes & Market Competition, Sharing Prohibition, and THC Limits.

I was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio, and have lived in Columbus for over 20 years. As a disabled business owner living with a traumatic brain injury and chronic pancreatitis, I have experienced firsthand how medical cannabis has reduced my need for dangerous pain medications and improved my quality of life.

I was one of the first medical cannabis patients in Ohio and founded Ohio Cannabis Live to educate and support the cannabis community. I am here today because many Ohioans cannot be-whether out of fear, health issues, or work conflicts-and I want to ensure their voices are heard.

## 1. Home Cultivation - Keep the Existing Limits

Ohio's current home grow limits are in line with other legal cannabis states.

- Growing cannabis isn't easy. It requires patience, skill, and the right conditions. Many grow multiple strains for specific effects, especially medical patients.
- Joints don't grow on trees. Home cultivation requires harvesting, drying, and curing before cannabis is usable. Cutting home grow limits won't change that.
- Reducing plant counts doesn't generate revenue. It wastes enforcement resources, just like banning smoking for medical patients. It doesn't make sense and would be nearly impossible to enforce.

## 2. Patient Rights & Consumer Protections

- Medical cannabis patients should be allowed to smoke their medicine. Prohibiting combustion pushes patients toward expensive, less effective alternatives.
- Ohioans should not lose jobs, housing, or healthcare for legal cannabis use. Patients are being denied pain management simply for using medical cannabis, and that discrimination must stop.
- Ohio needs safe consumption spaces. Alcohol-free venues should be available for legal, responsible cannabis use. Right now, many people resort to consuming in their cars, which is unsafe.

### 3. Taxes & Market Competition - Ohio Cannot Afford to Lose to Michigan

- Raising taxes from 10% to 15% will send more consumers to Michigan, where prices are already lower.
- Medical cannabis should be tax-free. Patients shouldn't pay extra for medicine.
- The Community and Social Equity Funds must remain at 36%. These funds are crucial for reinvesting in Ohio communities.
- Dispensaries should be allowed to advertise. Keeping restrictions in place makes it harder for Ohioans to know about legal options, pushing them toward Michigan or the illicit market.
- Law enforcement needs training, not more funding. Officers need a statewide training program to ensure they don't unfairly target cannabis consumers.

### 4. Sharing Prohibition - Social Cannabis Use Should Not Be Criminalized

- Sharing cannabis has been part of human culture for centuries. Banning it is unenforceable and unnecessary.
- Adults should be allowed to share cannabis with friends and family, just like homegrown produce or homemade wine. Prohibiting sharing would create unnecessary legal issues and push more people to unregulated markets.

### 5. THC Limits - One Size Does Not Fit All

- Cannabis affects everyone differently. Setting an arbitrary THC limit ignores medical needs.
- Forcing patients to buy weaker products means they'll have to buy more, increasing their costs.

Instead of restricting THC, we should educate the public on responsible use.

## 6. Call for an Ohio Cannabis Town Hall

Before making any changes to the law, Ohio lawmakers need to hear directly from the cannabis community.

- Ohio's cannabis laws are confusing even for law enforcement and local governments.
- We need an official, state-supported cannabis town hall in Columbus with lawmakers, regulators, law enforcement, medical professionals, business owners, and consumers to discuss real concerns and solutions.
- This town hall should be public, accessible, and have a virtual option so all Ohioans can participate.

## Closing Statement

I want to thank the committee for allowing me to testify today.

I am tired of Ohio losing to Michigan. I am tired of seeing their roads and cities get fixed while we fall behind. We need to take immediate action to improve our legal cannabis program. We need to shut down the black market and turn it into a green market of opportunities for Ohio residents.

I urge you to support the Ohio Cannabis Town Hall so we can make informed, community-driven decisions before changing the law.

I am happy to take any questions the committee might have about myself, Ohio Cannabis Live, or the proposed Ohio Cannabis Town Hall.

Thank you.