

**Opponent Testimony for SB56
General Government Committee**

February 18, 2025

Simon P. Dunkle IV
Executive Director
Ohio NORML

My name is Simon Peter Dunkle IV, I'm currently Executive Director of Ohio NORML. I have been a Cannabis Consumer for fifty years and a Medical Marijuana Patient in Ohio since 2019. I'm here to speak about SB 56 and the proposed changes to a successful Voter initiative that passed at the Ballot Box, with more than a 57% Majority Vote. Changing ANYTHING within the Issue 2 Initiative, should require that the State of Ohio repost the new Issue two, on the Statewide Ballot, for Voter approval. Manipulating the will of Ohio Voters, goes against everything our system of Government stands for or represents, especially the term "of the People, by the People, for the People". One of the most egregious considerations is to combine the Recreational and Medicinal Use Programs. Not only do you delegitimize it as a Medication, you miss the opportunity to offer Medicinal Strength products, separate from Recreational enjoyment. As an example, Activist/Patient Angelica Warren and I, were some of the first people to Testify for Medicinal Marijuana availability & Use, back in 2012. Sadly, Angelica has since passed. One of the difficulties she had was accessing Medicinal Strength Rick Simpson Oil.

Honestly, there is no reason to have any Marijuana Business Model in the State of Ohio, if you're not going to include Criminal Justice Reform and Anti-Discrimination Language, in SB 56 or ORC 3780. If you aren't going to give Citizens the Right of Use, you're just creating a Program that surreptitiously takes consumers money, while leaving them with a higher chance of Arrest and harassment, despite "Legalization".

As far as raising the Tax Rate of Marijuana in the State, there are more negatives, than positives. Ohio's main Competitors are Michigan and the Private Market. The best way for us to gain ground against them, is to keep the quality high, while keeping costs low. If you sell more Volume, your Tax Revenue will be higher, hence no need for a Tax increase.

We can assure the quality of our Products, by Cross Market Testing, at least twice a year. The State of Maine, took on the responsibility and came back with a Contamination Rate of 42% across their Program. You can't correct what you don't know about.

Lastly, as Elected Officials, you have a Duty to execute the Will of the People. You are Public Servants, not a Monarchy or Aristocracy. The Will of the People is known, by the successful passage of Issue 2, on November 7, 2023, in accordance with the State Constitution. Any variation of that Issue by this body, constitutes a Violation of our Citizens Constitutional Rights. Stop Ruling and start Governing. You don't hold an exclusive intelligence over this subject, take the advice of informed Voters, Citizens and Activists, like myself. As of right now, just leave Issue 2 alone, until you can provide "Right of Use", for all Cannabis Consumers, in the State.

This process over the last few Decades, has shown a complete lack of regard for Cannabis Users and their Rights, let's change that by working together.

**-Simon P. Dunkle IV
Executive Director
Ohio NORML
ohionormlbod@gmail.com**