



GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 02/16/2025

Name: Leo Orlando

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Organization Representing: Italian Herbs

Testifying on Bill Number: Senate Bill 59

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: _____

Dear Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective regarding Senate Bill 59. I am someone who works at a dispensary in Ohio and has direct experience with the impact that cannabis regulations have on both the business and our customers. As an employee who regularly interacts with patients and adult-use consumers, I have seen firsthand how these proposed changes could harm the accessibility, affordability, and overall experience for those who rely on cannabis. The three points I would like to address—taxes being increased and taken away from local municipalities, the potency cap of 100mg, and the requirement for separate storage for adult-use and medical cannabis—would create significant challenges for dispensaries and our customers alike.

1. Taxes Being Increased and Taken Away from Local Municipalities

The proposed increase in taxes on cannabis and the redistribution of funds away from local municipalities is an issue that concerns me deeply, both as an employee and as a member of the local community. Local municipalities benefit greatly from the tax revenue generated by cannabis sales, and this revenue helps fund essential services like public safety, infrastructure, and local healthcare programs. Shifting these funds to the state level would undermine the economic stability of the communities where cannabis businesses operate and take away vital resources that our local governments depend on. From a business perspective, higher taxes would likely lead to higher prices for cannabis products, making them even less affordable for those who rely on them for medical reasons. I have witnessed how price sensitivity affects patients, many of whom are already struggling with medical expenses. Taking away the ability of local governments to benefit from cannabis tax revenue will only exacerbate these problems and lead to a decrease in the quality of life for residents who rely on local services funded by those taxes.

2. Potency Cap of 100mg

The proposed potency cap of 100mg is another regulation that would negatively affect both dispensaries and our customers, particularly those who use cannabis for medical purposes that do not have a medical card for personal reasons. In my role at the dispensary, I have worked closely with patients who require higher-potency cannabis to effectively manage chronic conditions, including severe pain and other serious medical issues. A 100mg potency cap would limit their access to the products that work best for them, forcing them to purchase larger quantities of lower-potency products, which would not be as effective or economical.

Additionally, many patients and customers are already on fixed incomes, and the increased cost of purchasing larger amounts of less-potent products could make cannabis unaffordable for them. A potency cap could also push them toward the black market, where there are no safety regulations in place to protect them from contaminated or unsafe products. The current regulations in Ohio allow for a variety of products with varying potencies, and I believe it is essential to maintain this flexibility to meet the diverse needs of patients and customers alike.

3. Separate Storage for Adult Use and Medical Marijuana

The proposed requirement to store adult-use and medical cannabis products separately is an impractical and unnecessary regulation. As someone who works at a dispensary, I can tell you that this would create logistical challenges, increase operational costs, and ultimately harm the consumer experience. At present, medical and adult-use products are already clearly distinguished by their labeling, and requiring separate storage does not provide any additional benefits in terms of safety or security.

For dispensaries, this would mean a significant increase in the need for additional space and storage systems, driving up operational costs. These costs could be passed on to the consumer, making cannabis even more expensive for both medical and adult-use customers. Additionally, this separation would add complexity to an already busy and time-sensitive process for patients who may have mobility issues or need additional assistance. The goal of any cannabis policy should be to streamline access, not create unnecessary hurdles.

In conclusion, I strongly oppose the proposed increases in taxes that take away from local municipalities, the potency cap of 100mg, and the requirement for separate storage of adult-use and medical cannabis. Each of these provisions would create significant challenges for dispensaries, patients, and consumers alike. The goal of Ohio's cannabis regulations should be to improve access, reduce costs, and provide the best possible experience for all those who rely on cannabis for medical or recreational purposes. I urge the committee to reconsider these proposed changes and adopt policies that better serve both the cannabis industry and the citizens of Ohio.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leo Orlando

**Assistant General Manager
Italian Herbs Dispensary**