



**Ohio Senate  
General Government Committee  
March 18, 2025  
Proponent Testimony on SB 86**

Good afternoon, Chairman Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and Members of the Senate General Government Committee. My name is Leah Kaufman and I am the Assistant Vice President of Public Policy at Shatterproof. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent written testimony and convey Shatterproof's support of **Senate Bill 86** to protect Ohio consumers, particularly youth, from the dangers of unregulated synthetic THC products such as Delta-8 THC. The proliferation of these products in gas stations, convenience stores, and smoke shops—without regulatory oversight—poses a significant public health risk. We urge the committee to advance SB 86 to close this dangerous loophole and protect Ohio families.

Shatterproof is a national nonprofit, organization dedicated to ending the addiction crisis. We focus on empowering communities, removing systemic barriers to recovery, and mobilizing the country to advocate for change.

As you are likely aware, the 2018 Farm Bill was intended to legalize hemp for industrial uses such as fiber and textiles, not to create a loophole for synthetic intoxicants. However, the removal of hemp and its derivatives from the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) inadvertently allowed for the mass production of intoxicating compounds like Delta-8 THC through chemical conversion of hemp-derived CBD. The lack of clear federal oversight has enabled a market where synthetic THC products are mass-produced, often mislabeled, and sold with misleading claims. The FDA has repeatedly stated that they are unapproved and unsafe for human consumption.[1] Despite issuing warning letters to manufacturers, enforcement remains inconsistent, allowing these unregulated products to flourish.

**What These Products Are & Why They're a Concern**

Delta-8 THC and other synthetic cannabinoids are not naturally occurring in the amounts found in commercial products. Instead, they are chemically converted from CBD using solvents and acids in an industrial process that is poorly regulated. Studies have found that many Delta-8 products contain residual solvents, heavy metals, and unknown byproducts.[2] The lack of testing requirements means consumers have no way of knowing what they are ingesting.

The FDA has explicitly warned against Delta-8 THC products, citing cases of accidental poisonings, hospitalizations, and severe adverse reactions.[4] Without regulation, there are no labeling, dosage, or contamination safeguards. Many products have been found to contain significantly higher THC levels than labeled, leading to unpredictable and unsafe effects.

**Youth Exposure & Mental Health Risks**

Synthetic THC products are frequently marketed to children, much like flavored nicotine vapes. A recent study from the Keck School of Medicine found that over 11% of U.S. 12th graders reported using Delta-8 THC last year, with higher rates in states that lacked regulations.[5] These products are often sold as gummies, candies, and vapes with colorful packaging designed to appeal to minors.

Research has established a link between cannabis use disorder (CUD) and increased risks of schizophrenia, particularly in young men. A 2023 study found that as many as 30% of schizophrenia cases in men aged 21-30 could be attributed to CUD.[6] Additionally, youth cannabis use has been associated with increased risks of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.[7] Given that synthetic THC products often have higher potency and unknown contaminants, these risks are likely magnified.

**The Policy Solution: Why SB 86 is Necessary to Protect Ohio Families**

Seventeen states have already banned Delta-8 THC, and seven others have imposed regulations aimed at protecting consumers.[8] Many other states have current legislation pending aimed at implementing similar restrictions. Ohio has the opportunity to follow best practices and ensure consumer safety.

SB 86 wisely grants the Ohio Department of Commerce, consistent with their existing responsibility to regulate adult use cannabis, the authority to regulate emerging hemp-derived intoxicants, preventing future loopholes from being exploited. This is a proactive approach to ensuring that new synthetic cannabinoids do not evade regulation in the future.

SB 86 also establishes a regulatory framework for drinkable cannabinoid products, mandates product testing and package labeling requirements, establishes per container THC limits, and prohibits selling these beverages to individuals under 21, all of which are best practices that have demonstrated impact in reducing youth exposure to these products.

**Conclusion**

Shatterproof strongly supports SB 86 as a necessary measure to protect Ohio consumers, particularly youth, from the dangers of unregulated synthetic THC products. We urge the committee to advance this bill to close the regulatory loophole and establish safeguards against future unregulated intoxicants.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. I am happy to answer any questions from the committee.

Sincerely,



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Assistant Vice President, Public Policy  
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## References

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