

**Testimony in opposition to SB 86**  
**Jim Higdon, co-founder, Cornbread Hemp & VP of Outreach, US Hemp Roundtable**

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear and members of the Senate General Government Committee, my name is Jim Higdon. I'm co-founder of Cornbread Hemp, a manufacturer of hemp products based just downriver in Louisville, Kentucky, and I'm here today to voice my strong opposition to SB 86.

Last week, I watched the hearings in favor of this bill, including a representative from the Catholic Conference of Ohio, who testified that hemp products represent a serious threat to the moral fabric of this state. So I would like to share that I am a cradle Catholic from Lebanon, Kentucky; educated by the Sisters of Loretto; and married in the Church. The last Prohibition that plagued our nation a century ago was profoundly anti-Catholic, and I encourage my fellow Catholics to reflect on that history when encountering this new prohibition of today.

I do not see my work as a provider of USDA certified organic full spectrum hemp products to the citizens of Ohio to be sinful or disorderly. In fact, we take very seriously our commitment to providing quality products to adult customers in need of natural supplements to help in three general categories: pain, anxiety, and troubles with sleep.

We agree with the basic premise of SB 86 that hemp products should be regulated to ensure consumer safety, prevent underage access, and taxed appropriately to support Ohio's enforcement of its regulations. However, the strict caps proposed by SB 86 would eliminate all effective hemp products for Ohioans looking for natural product supplements to support their legitimate wellness needs.

Today, Cornbread Hemp sells our products in more than 30 retail stores in Ohio, including 10 Fresh Thyme Market locations and other family-owned businesses. The customers at these stores tend to be older adults with expendable incomes, not teenagers looking for a cheap, unregulated high.

We have asked our customers to email their senators in Ohio to express their concerns about SB 86, and to date, more than 400 constituents have sent emails, many of which have gone to members of this committee.

By restricting sales of any hemp product with more than 0.5 milligrams of THC by forcing those products into the dispensary system, this body would prevent out-of-state manufacturers like Cornbread from doing business in Ohio, which makes SB 86 vulnerable in federal court to a claim that it violates the dormant Commerce Clause.

Further, hemp products are legal under federal law, but marijuana sold in dispensaries remains illegal. We do not want our industry, which is focused on wellness products, to be forced into the control of another industry that is focused on recreational products and which is still considered illegal under federal law.

Cornbread Hemp would like to sell our federally legal hemp products, including hemp oils, topicals, gummies, and beverages in reputable retail outlets, like Fresh Thyme Markets, to customers who present identification at check-out to ensure they are at least 21 years old, but SB 86, if passed as written, would not allow us to do so. I welcome your questions.