



OHIO ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE, INC.

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present you with the concerns of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police with the provisions of Senate Bill 261. While we accept that medical marijuana is legal in Ohio, we are opposed to any further erosion of the current controls and rules in place.

OACP accepts that current law permits a limited use of medical marijuana in the State of Ohio. That use is regulated by the Board of Pharmacy and is limited to a select group of medical conditions. To further expand to language that permits for virtually any medical condition when there are alternatives available is simply laying the legislative path for full recreational marijuana. Marijuana is currently an illegal drug otherwise, and all you need do is look at other states that have tried to profit off legalization to realize that it is not an experience we want in Ohio. That will be an argument for another time.

More concerning now to OACP is the removal of the medical marijuana oversight authority from the Board of Pharmacy to the Dept. of Commerce. The Board of Pharmacy is set up for exactly the purpose of regulating pharmaceutical and the legal distribution of drugs in Ohio. Medical marijuana naturally falls directly under their authority. Understanding the potential for diversion and abuse, it is concerning that this legislation would make marijuana the only drug removed from the jurisdiction of the Board of Pharmacy. Government interest in marijuana should not be about commerce or streamlining business, it should be about the regulation of a drug. Protecting Ohio means that medical marijuana should be regulated like any other drug, under the authority of the Board of Pharmacy.

The Board of Pharmacy has a staff of experienced Law Enforcement investigators who are experienced in investigating and presenting evidence of violations of drug laws. That is their current mission, and they do it in conjunction with the established relationships they have with local law enforcement across the state. Those established relationships are important to us.

OACP accepts that medical marijuana is here to stay, but we do not support the expansion of its use for medical conditions that have other treatment options available. Marijuana is a schedule I drug that is still illegal under U.S. Code, and it highly susceptible to diversion into our communities. This clearly creates some complexities to manage. Those complexities are a cost of doing business – and should not be minimized at the expense of public safety. We encourage you to leave the regulation of medical marijuana under the Board of Pharmacy, with whom we share a mutually beneficial and professional relationship.