



State Representatives Sedrick Denson
Sponsor Testimony | HB 634 | House Criminal Justice Committee
Wednesday December 9th, 2020

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 634. This legislation allows for the cultivation and possession of marihuana, to modify possession and cultivation penalties, and to allow for expungement of certain marihuana convictions.

House Bill 634 would legalize the cultivation of marihuana. Under this legislation no one would be permitted to cultivate more than 12 plants. Doing so knowingly would make one guilty of illegal cultivation of marihuana. There are also certain circumstances in which one would not be permitted to take part in the cultivation of marihuana plants. No one is permitted to cultivate marijuana on property one does not own and without written consent, in places within public view, property that is not secured from those under 21 and or those that do not have the cultivator's permission to access the space.

This legislation would also legalize possession of certain amounts of marihuana. This legislation would make it so Ohio's code barring the use of controlled substance no longer applies to marihuana. Allowing one to possess no more than 100 grams of marihuana or 10 grams of hashish.

Those who were or are convicted of or plead guilty to obtaining, possession of, or use of 100 grams or less of marihuana 10 or less grams of hashish, or the cultivation of 12 or less marihuana plants have a qualified marihuana offense and are eligible to file an application for expungement of that record.

This bill is a crucial piece of criminal justice reform legislation. For far too long, too many people have received long prison sentences for offenses involving marihuana, disproportionately black and brown people. Harsh laws surrounding marihuana have, for far too long, opened the door for underserved communities to be bullied, instead provided with the resources needed to survive and prosper. It is about time that we not only stop criminalizing marihuana, but retroactively restore justice as well by expunging records.