



Chairman Edwards, and Distinguished Members of the House Finance and Appropriations Committee,

My name is Fadi G. Boumitri. I am the owner of a Level 2 cultivation facility located in Oberlin, Ohio. I do not own any part of any dispensaries, nor of a processor. My company is a standalone cultivation facility that employs 17 people.

I am a 35 year resident of Ohio that has put my entire net worth into winning a cultivation license in Ohio so my grandmother could have alternatives to the harsh, doctor prescribed medications that made her lose sight in one eye, deteriorated the quality of her later years, and failed to prolong her life. I gave up my career as an attorney of 12 years and took on debt for the first time in my life (over \$3M) so I could be part of her access to alternative medicine and help others discover what I had only recently discovered: that what I believed since I was a child learning about marijuana in school was mostly false and wildly suppressive of the positive side of marijuana.

Today, I write you in opposition to any language that would foster the continued diversion of Ohio tax dollars to Michigan, as well as total loss of tax dollars and revenue dollars to the Black Market.

If only one sentence from my letter is heard, I hope it is this: every Ohioan that wants access to marijuana already has it. There is not a single person in Ohio that is thinking "I wish I had access to marijuana, but I don't." This is especially true now with Home Grow having been passed. Whether over 21 and going to Michigan, or under 21 and buying from the Black Market or illicit Home Growers, every Ohioan has access to marijuana. I ask you this: would you prefer that Ohioans use marijuana that benefits Michigan, use marijuana that benefits illicit growers, or use marijuana that benefits Ohio?

If you said you want marijuana usage in Ohio to benefit Michigan or illicit growers, there are four simple things you would do to accomplish that: 1. increase the taxes on Ohio legal marijuana entities and legal dispensary sales so that Michigan marijuana and Black Market marijuana are more affordable than Ohio marijuana, 2. decrease the purity of Ohio legal marijuana so that Michigan marijuana, Black Market marijuana, and Home Grown marijuana are more desirable products than Ohio marijuana, 3. keep the current Ohio cultivators small so Ohio dispensaries cannot meet the demand in Ohio, allowing the Michigan and Black Market producers to keep (and gain) as much market share as possible, and 4. keep the number of dispensaries in Ohio so limited that people have to drive far to get access, at which point they might as well drive to Michigan or to illicit seller down the street to get it instead. Each of these

things will strangle the Ohio market and allow Michigan and the illicit market to thrive, but all of them together will kill the Ohio legal marijuana market and ensure that Michigan and the Black Market win.

If you said you want marijuana usage in Ohio to benefit Ohio, then you need to allow Issue 2 to stand as it was written. Sure, there are things I want to see to make the bill better (I would love more square footage and more dispensaries to foster competition in the market and help smaller, craft, Ohio-based companies survive and thrive), but I will put that aside for a moment. There are also reasonable changes that I would like to see made to protect Ohioans, but I will put that aside for a moment as well. It certainly is not a perfect bill, but it does a decent job of addressing the issue before us: Ohio losing Five Hundred Million Dollars or more in tax revenue each year to Michigan and the Black Market.

I understand that there is a lot of information that is getting thrown around right now. I can assure you these things are true:

- (A) of the 14 Level 2 cultivators in Ohio, only 5 have dispensaries (5 are vertically integrated);
- (B) of the 14 Level 2 cultivators in Ohio, 10 are Ohio owned and Ohio based businesses and only one of those 10 has even a single dispensary (that group has 1 dispensary from RFA 2);

Those 10 Ohio owned and Ohio based businesses were given a lifeline in the language of Issue 2 with a dispensary license issued to them and an expansion to 15,000 square feet, as well as a tax rate that competes with Michigan's tax rate. Please do not take those lifelines away from us.

Sincerely,

Fadi G. Boumitri
CEO of Ascension BioMedical LLC
Level 2 Cultivator