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Chairman Rulli, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member DeMora, and members of the General Government Committee.

Thank you for allowing my proponent testimony today for Senate Bill 9 of the 135th General Assembly, which would revise the current medical marijuana law in Ohio.

I bring my testimony today both as a registered medical marijuana patient and caregiver in Ohio and as spokesperson for MedicateOH, a non-profit publication I founded in 2019 to support patients. I'm also a former Patient Care Representative ("Budtender") for Verilife Dispensary in Cincinnati.

I came back to my home state of Ohio from Nevada, where my medical marijuana card led me in 2016 down a path to releasing my need for opioids, despite still suffering from degenerative disc disease after two failed discectomy surgeries. I took my last opioid pill and left pain management in June 2019 once Ohio's dispensaries were close enough to me in Cincinnati for me to get reliable legal access to medicinal cannabis. My natural recovery with using only cannabis as medicine for my chronic pain is nothing short of remarkable four years later, especially amid the backdrop of the opioid crisis we're battling in this state and nationwide.

Medicinal cannabis has been life-saving for me, no matter the cost of it. I was prepared to pay high prices for my medical marijuana in Ohio and I have. As a seasoned journalist with a focus on deeper understanding of the medicine and policies of cannabis, I've also worked inside the system at a dispensary so that I could understand their interworkings a bit better. Coupled with a solid understanding of supply and demand after 12 years as an operations manager in the automotive manufacturing sector and a full appreciation of the complex legislative process based on my master's degree in public administration from Northern Kentucky University, I urge the committee to weigh my testimony with the level of expertise it warrants.

SB9 falls short of many of the needed improvements that Ohioans deserve, but I believe that those changes can better be implemented once the program is streamlined under the Commerce department. The revisions laid out in SB9 would help both the cost and access issues that patients currently experience and I believe the additional qualifying conditions would bring in more eligible patients.

According to Ohio State's recent DEPC survey, high prices are continuing to limit participation in the program. I believe that prices could better be controlled under the purview of Commerce. Allowing advertising is a key element of this. Patients currently rely on a loose system of third-party apps and social media sites to learn about promotions and specials that would make

prices of cannabis more affordable for them. For myself and as caregiver to a Desert Storm veteran who uses cannabis for PTSD, we've learned to navigate the system in order to consistently get prices that are affordable in relation to surrounding states. But it still isn't an effective way to shop and patients without veteran or indigent status, or this random third-party knowledge are currently being shut out of these deals. That's not fair.

Accepting advertising from the dispensaries would also be a key way my non-profit publication MedicateOH could further help patients know when/where the best prices are while continuing with our mission and extensive work in helping Ohioans understand the risks, complexities and benefits of cannabis as medicine. Currently, the advertising restrictions greatly restrict the work that we're able to do to bring information to patients and the greater community.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 9 on behalf of all Ohio patients. Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter. I will now take any questions you may have.

*Sincerely,
Gabrielle Dion*