



Senator Steve Huffman
5th District
Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
March 6, 2019
Senate Bill 57

Chairman Hoagland, Vice-Chair Hill, Ranking Member O'Brien, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee: Thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony today on Senate Bill 57.

Hemp is not marijuana. While industrial hemp and marijuana both derive from the same plant genus, they possess many different properties—the main difference being that industrial hemp contains only trace amounts of THC (the intoxicating chemical in marijuana), so it does not produce psychoactive effects on humans like marijuana does. Following federal law, hemp grown in Ohio must contain no more than 0.3% THC.

Also in accordance with federal law, hemp cultivation license holders will need to complete a background check to ensure they have not been convicted of a felony drug offense in the last ten years. Misdemeanors and minor possession charges will not prevent anyone from obtaining a license to grow hemp. Only the license holder will be required to receive a background check, not every individual involved in the operation.

In Aug. 2018, the Ohio Board of Pharmacy ruled that (cannabidiol) CBD oil had to be sold through the Ohio Medical Marijuana Control Program. However, in December, Congress passed the 2018 Farm Bill into law, taking hemp off the controlled substances list and treating it permanently as an agricultural commodity. Thus, SB 57 follows that law and likewise clarifies Ohio law by changing the relevant definitions and removing hemp and hemp derived products like CBD from Ohio's controlled substances list. We are distinguishing hemp from marijuana just as the federal government has done and making hemp and hemp products legal for sale.

The legislation before you today has the support of the Ohio Farm Bureau as well as input from several other stakeholders. SB 57 has the full intention of helping and doing what is best for Ohio farmers and we will continue to work with them to find the best solutions to any concerns with the legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony to you today, I am happy to answer any questions you may have.