

Chairman Barker and House Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing a hearing on House Bill 2184 and the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this proposed legislation. I am a proud Kansan, lifelong Topekan, and I come from a family of farmers and civil servants. I am also honored and grateful to have helped this movement over the past six years by co-authoring multiple introduced bills to enact evidence-based cannabis regulations for our state. Please know I wholeheartedly support you in this decision,¹ and wish to offer any insight or additional information that may be necessary throughout the process.

Based on research and collaborative work with partners, I wish to provide the following recommendations on how this legislation can be adapted to accomplish what is intended and necessary for a Kansas solution. HB2184 should be improved by incorporating lessons from states:

- According to information from Ohio²⁻⁷ most legal and programmatic issues can be prevented, especially in states with areas of rural or frontier counties, by not limiting access within statute.
 - Numbers show when the ability is limited for patients to produce or access cannabis (i.e. not protecting patient cultivation or requiring high fees); participation in programs suffers – negatively affecting revenue – driving people to illicit markets or nearby states.
 - Ensuring there is no cap on licenses prevents problems similar to what happened in MO.
- Creating a cannabis rules and regulatory advisory board for decision-making [*similar to SB92*]⁸ allows for agility since cannabis policy is multi-faceted and always evolving with rapid scientific advancements. A good example is the OMMA⁹ currently administering Oklahoma's program.
- A change supporting both patients and medical providers: allow reciprocity for other states and recommendations for the myriad of conditions which cannabis has been established as a safe and effective therapy, including definitions within the Americans with Disabilities Act.

I am fortunate to collaborate with subject matter experts from states and countries in sharing data, resources and challenges towards reaching consistent knowledge along with standardized capabilities involving cannabis. Based on my understanding, despite what some may fear not only are there exponential therapeutic opportunities for Kansans to directly benefit by reintroducing cannabis, but the number of valuable ancillary and indirect, positive impacts are also abundant. A major effect is the much-needed reframing of substance use away from punishment and criminalization to a public health perspective. I ask you to protect the common good by putting public health and the lives of Kansans' first, and vote to enact medicinal cannabis reforms.

Thank you & please feel free to reach out anytime,

- Kelly Rippel

Co-Founder, Kansans for Hemp

Appointed Member, Industrial Hemp Research Advisory Board,

Kansas Department of Agriculture (2.1.19-1.31.20)

References:

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