

**Testimony of Chris Wright, Grassroots Party,
Submitted to the Committee on
Commerce, Finance and Policy
Minnesota House of Representatives
February 17, 2021**

Chairman Stephenson, members of the Commerce, Finance and Policy Committee, thank you for considering my testimony on HF600.

When it comes to defending our fragile democracy, restoring citizen control of government and reigning in corporate power we are in the fight of our lives.

I want to thank House Majority Leader, Ryan Winkler, for his extensive work on this bill. The town hall forums Rep. Winkler named “Be heard on Cannabis,” were well attended. I attended all but one. Throughout the state, when called upon, I turned and asked locals, ”All in favor of growing as much cannabis as you want in your backyard garden without a license as guaranteed in the Minnesota Constitution? raise your hand,” virtually all hands were raised in favor. When asked, “Those opposed, raise your hand,” perhaps a few hands were raised in opposition. Will you ask your constituents the same question? Will they be “Heard on Cannabis?”

I fundamentally disagree with Representative Winkler’s denial of our Constitutional rights in this bill, however, I agree with the vast majority of what is contained in it.

Up to now, there have been futile efforts to craft a bill to legalize adult-use cannabis. Unfortunately, little time and legislative labor has been used in a detailed examination of the historic “**criminalization by fraud**” of cannabis. It says in Article 13, Section 7 [A13,S7], of the Minnesota Constitution, “**No license required to peddle. Any person may sell or peddle the products of the farm or garden occupied and cultivated by him without obtaining a license therefor.**”

In 1935, the same year Minnesota legalized liquor, Governor Floyd Olson and the legislature criminalized cannabis by requiring a pharmacy license. They broke the supreme law of this state by requiring a license and perjured their oath of office to protect and defend the Constitution of Minnesota.

Now Representative Ryan Winkler wishes to regulate adult-use cannabis by licensure without restoring our Constitutional rights provided in Article 13, Section 7. This is nothing more than “**legalization by fraud**,” defrauding Minnesotans of their Constitutional right to cultivate, sell and peddle without a license.

Are there **any** among you who intend to obey the supreme law of our state and restore our rights? If not, then why did you take a solemn oath to uphold the Minnesota Constitution? If there are, I would be pleased if you would attach the amendments I’ve offered to this legislation.

If I had to support one fraud over another, I would prefer Rep. Winkler’s **legalization by fraud** over **criminalization by fraud**, since both require an unconstitutional license. This is the only reason I support HF600. With the right amendments this could be a good bill.

On the specific concerns of this committee, **definitions** for Artificial Entity, Constitutional, Market Garden, Person and Unlicensed Business are required to be in compliance with the Minnesota Constitution.

To quote legal theorist Lysander Spooner, “Vices are those acts by which a man harms himself or his property. Crimes are those acts by which one man harms the person or property of another. Vices are simply the errors which a man makes in his search after his own happiness. Unlike crimes, they imply no malice toward others, and no interference with their persons or property,” and “Still another and all-sufficient answer to the argument that the use of spirituous liquors tends to poverty, is that, as a general rule, it puts the effect before the cause. It assumes that it is the use of the liquors that causes the poverty, instead of its being the poverty that causes the use of the liquors.”

Lysander Spooner was right, vices are not crimes. By criminalizing vice you monetize and solicit crime. As an unfree nation with the most imprisoned population on earth, America’s War on Drugs is a colossal failure. Given human nature, the legalization of alcohol, adult-use cannabis and other illicit drugs is inevitable. Therefore, I question why there needs to be a separate Cannabis Advisory Board when we already have a Department of Public Safety, Division of Alcohol and Gambling. Why not combine them to save money instead of creating a completely separate bureaucracy that duplicates effort? Be that as it may, **establishing a Cannabis Advisory Board** is a necessary step.

In terms of the **specific duties of the Board**, a member should **never** be allowed to serve as a lobbyist while serving on the board and after terminating service from the board in order to reign in corporate power. It's time to end the revolving door. Legislators, aides, public officials or their staff, must be barred for life from working for a company, organization, or association which lobbies government. This bill would allow a board member to become a lobbyist after two years. This corruption must end and is unacceptable.

When it comes to **environmental standards**, the board should not have the power to enforce environmental standards that are more onerous than any other business. Mandating the use of solar and wind, electric vehicles, the purchase of credits and forcing legacy medical cannabis manufacturers to transition to solar within five years when the state does not require this for all businesses is inequitable. The alcohol industry doesn't have to meet these requirements. Why does this bill make an exception for cannabis? This requirement places an unnecessary burden on the new industry. Instead, the state needs to pass separate legislation that is fair to all to combat global warming. See 15-proposed Grassroots Party mandates to end ecocide <https://grassrootsparty.net/combat-global-warming/>

The **lawful use and penalties** contained in Section 8 are unconstitutional. There should be no penalties for a person 21 years of age to sell or peddle, to a person 21 years of age or older, raw cannabis, concentrate lawfully extracted with the services of a licensed cannabis manufacturer or microbusiness or infused products under the Cottage Foods Exemption [28A.152] if produced from their market garden.

With regard to the **licensing and operation of the medical cannabis** program, registered designated caregivers should be allowed to serve more than one patient if they are a certified Personal Care Assistant or a Home Health Aide.

With consideration to **advertising**, the Cannabis Management Board should have the power to approve reasonable advertising, in the same manner as alcohol.

When it comes to the **social equity applicants and community renewal grants** contained in this bill, I am not opposed. However, the con artists of diversity like to use the cloak of diversity, equity and identity politics to mask, mollify and divert their intention to enrich the wealthy and curtail civil liberties. Racial diversity and equity in the hands of the corporate power establishment does not guarantee social and economic justice as anyone with any sense knows. This bill is no different. It enriches wealthy investors and curtails civil liberties by denying our Constitutional

rights. If only wealthy investors can afford the conditions of a license to cultivate, sell & peddle, then there is **NO EQUITY** for anybody, much less the sick or poor who are excluded from the market, forced to buy overpriced cannabis they cannot afford and suffer from regressive taxation from a government that doesn't obey the law [A13,S7] which forbids requiring a license to grow your own. When the government doesn't obey the law, it creates public disrespect for all our laws.

I am not opposed to the **transfer of the medical program and task force**. However, there should be a sunset clause for the task force. It should not be allowed to operate in perpetuity. This is a waste of taxpayer money.

This hearing is an important and historic beginning, Mr. Chairman. I urge this Committee and the Bill's sponsors to adopt the amendments and language I have written for this bill. As the Chair of the Grassroots Party, we are ready to join with you to help expand on the opportunity presented at this hearing.

Thank you.