

Attn: House Committee Members

Re: HF 1355

My name is Josh Hassing, and I am the Director of Regulatory Compliance for Twin Cities Cannabis, a CBD company located here in Minnesota. I am submitting written testimony in support of HF 1355 as I believe this bill, if passed into law, would be a step in the right direction regarding the relationship between public safety and cannabis use within our ever-evolving society.

As I'm sure we're all aware, public (as well as legal) perception of cannabis and its many uses has been continuously shifting over the past several years. At one point this plant was heavily vilified, as were those who chose to use it. Old propaganda referring to "Reefer Madness" painted cannabis and its users in quite an interesting albeit entirely false light for decades. In recent years, however, countless time, effort and money have all been poured into cannabis research, proving time and again that this plant has amazing medicinal properties.

This being said, Minnesota's medical program still falls extremely short of actually meeting the needs of patients using cannabis as medication, which is where I believe HF 1355 can come into play. I am very aware of *several* participants of the Minnesota medical program who are required to supplement their medical cannabis with illicit products, simply due to the prices at the dispensaries. Then, in some cases, these individuals are caught in one way or another with the illicit product, leading to legal ramifications.

Cannabis users who find themselves in this situation are often faced with the possibility of losing their jobs, paying thousands of dollars in fines, and possibly even incarceration. All for simply trying to seek relief from pain, PTSD, anxiety, or a number of other possible ailments that cannabis offers relief from. This is further exacerbated by the user's potential favorite delivery method of the cannabis when considering the current "small amount" provision in Minnesota law. The current provision only includes "flower", which means cartridges, disposable pens, and concentrates (often referred to as dabs) all carry potential felony sentences. Furthermore, current law allows for the weight of the water within a water-pipe to be considered in the total weight of the cannabis. Think of this like the butcher putting his hand on the scale when he's weighing the roast you're picking up for dinner. Does it sound like the right thing to do?

These alternative delivery methods do not contain "more potent THC", as I have heard a few times. And while the THC content within the product is indeed greater, this does not necessarily affect the user differently in any way. Simply put, these other mediums simply offer a more efficient way to intake the cannabinoids. By utilizing concentrates, oils or vapes, the user is actually better equipped to ensure they are giving themselves the proper dose as opposed to simply burning the flower. Also, these mediums are often more economical for the user, as they are able to get more of the same product (just in a different form) for less money, and they're also able to make it last longer. These, however, are all felonies regardless of the amount found in possession. We've now transitioned from the butcher placing his hand on the scale to the butcher kicking you out of the shop for wanting a better cut of meat. Still sound like the right thing to do?

Please keep in mind... Nothing that I am saying is regarding drug dealers, people hauling tractor-trailers full of illicit products, etc. I'm referring strictly to Minnesotans who purchase these products for their own use.

When people are asked to imagine a cannabis user, I'm sure many will picture that "stoner" or "pot head" from movies like *"Half-Baked"* (I mean... yeah, they exist). What many people probably won't imagine, however, is the single mom burning both ends of that candle working two jobs and raising her kids alone after escaping an abusive relationship that left her with PTSD. She has the medical card, but she can't afford the prices, so maybe she goes to a friend, a co-worker, or a relative. The law as written paints her as a criminal when she's just trying to do what she has to do to make it through the day for her children. Does she sound like a criminal?

I know I'm ending a decent amount of these paragraphs with questions, but it's because I'm genuinely asking. I genuinely want to know if you consider a working parent suffering with anxiety, migraines, or some other ailment a criminal because they're using a product that science has proven to be effective, even if it didn't come from a dispensary bogged down by miles of bureaucratic red tape, licensing fees, and unreasonably high prices. If that doesn't sound like a criminal to you, then I urge you to support this bill. If that *does* sound like a criminal to you, then you may very well need some serious time to think about how you view the world around you.

Thank you for your time,

Josh Hassing

Director of Regulatory Compliance

Twin Cities Cannabis

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