

To the Hon. Committee Members

Hello Members, my name is Chad Hewitt, a registered Republican from St. Paul, Mn. I would first like to start by saying "Thank You for this opportunity". Now, Americans are sick and tired of politicians across the board and keep in mind elections are around the corner. So, I do have concerns about the cannabis industry in Mn. A quick background on me. Born in the early 70's and a DARE child. I come from a community serving family and was against cannabis/narcotics. I decided to go down the law enforcement/EMS route. I was fortunate enough to work at both the private and state-run correctional facilities here in MN. I also had the distinct pleasure of serving on two rural EMS services and a metro area Sheriff's Office reserve unit. I have also had the unpleasant experience of doing CPR on my 4-month-old nephew, helping a rural medical examiner remove and exam a family of 3 involved in a fiery crash, as well as the person that caused it; plus, other events. During those years I battled with neck pain and PTSD's. Then in 2007, I had neck surgery that left me with continued pain, a metal plate and screws in my neck. I was prescribed several different medications; 2 different opiates(long & short acting), NSAIDS, different muscle relaxants, anti-depressants and a few others. I became physically addicted to the opiates; and the muscle relaxants put me into outer space where I could barely function. The addiction affected EVERY aspect of my life(couldn't pay bills, missed family events and work). I pissed the prime years of my life away. I was forced to resign a beloved job; I hide the addiction rather than admitting it, and now, am a product of "the system". Then a changing point in my life. While going through bad withdrawals, a friend gave me some cannabis. I was lied to my whole life, by who, my family, politicians, police, teachers. I was able to get on the medical cannabis program, but have been on/off the program due to cost & selection. With the help of cannabis, I am down to 1 opiate(and a fraction of the dose, and hope to be off completely within 6-8 months) and med. cannabis. Cannabis has allowed me to work at getting my life back and have learned a ton about the industry. People in the middle and lower class CANNOT afford and/or don't like MN's program. Extremely expensive and extremely selective medications. MN's' medical program IS NOT WORKING. People are forced to the UNCONTROLLED BLACK MARKET and WILL CONTINUE to use it until it is legal. Just look at the Vape cart issue a few years back; When people were having lung issues due to people adding contaminants. Big organizations that oppose cannabis have a vested interest to oppose it. They have the time and money to pay lobbyist. But yet, if they did a completely random and surprise drug test on their organization members, there would be a good percentage that would test positive for THC. Those members will not openly admit they use or support cannabis. They want to keep their jobs. There has been concerns over the increase in the potency of cannabis. Knowing the potency allows the consumer to know how much to consume. And in most cases the higher percentage, less will be used to reach the desired effect. Similar to alcohol, 30 proof vs 100 proof. Also knowing potency may also indicate it may have gone thru testing and thus is safer. That is why there is testing regulation in the bill. We all don't want minors to obtain or be exposed to cannabis. We need to be responsible adults and educators and educate the future generations of the truth of cannabis. They already do have child resistant containers/bags out on the market for cannabis use. Child resistant resealable bags for flower/edibles products; and containers similar to prescription bottles for pills/edibles. If, HF 600 does not move forward it will only strengthen the black-market here in Mn and nationwide, especially with legalization coming to our borders. SF 1179 and associated bills does nothing but support the current dispensaries, some patients and the black-market. HF 600 is a very well put together bill that will benefit Mn as a whole. Cannabis is not a new industry, it's an industry being revitalized. Thank you for your time. Any question feel free to contact me at [chadhewitt64@gmail.com](mailto:chadhewitt64@gmail.com)