



**Senate Bill 57: Hemp Cultivation  
Written Testimony  
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Chairman Koehler and members of the Ohio House Agriculture & Rural Development Committee, my name is Sante Ghetti and I am a member of the Greater Cleveland Partnership's advocacy team. The Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) represents small, middle market, and large businesses in the state, with more than 11,000 members. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 57 (SB 57) on behalf of our members.

As you know, SB 57 was introduced in late February and the bill would formally decriminalize hemp in Ohio by excluding it from the definition of marijuana that is used to enforce controlled substance laws. The latest federal farm bill, enacted by Congress, removed hemp from listing under the Controlled Substances Act, allowing states to regulate hemp through their departments of agriculture.

A vast majority of states have now enacted legislation to establish industrial hemp cultivation and production programs. Ohio does not currently have any specific laws in place regarding hemp or hemp products, and hemp and hemp products are prohibited in Ohio because hemp comes from the same plant as marijuana – cannabis. Therefore, hemp is currently considered a Schedule I controlled substance under Ohio law.

In line with federal law, SB 57 would allow for the sales of hemp, clearly defining hemp and marijuana as different. Industrial hemp and marijuana may both be obtained from the same plant, but marijuana and hemp notably possess unique properties. For example, hemp does not produce psychoactive effects like marijuana because it contains exceptionally small amounts of THC – the intoxicating chemical in marijuana. Also consistent with federal law, any hemp that is grown in Ohio in the future would contain no more than 0.3% THC.

It's important to note, GCP did not take a formal position on previous medical marijuana legalization legislation that passed. We did advocate, however, for employer protections that were ultimately included in current law that allow employers to enforce a drug-free workplace. And, a GCP member serves on the Ohio Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee, which continues to provide guidance on the implementation of the medical marijuana law.

In closing, our membership sees merit in aligning state and federal laws – as it relates to hemp – allowing for a responsible, reputable hemp market with the potential to expand jobs and increase prosperity in Ohio. We join the considerable group of proponents for this bill, urge passage of SB 57, and thank you for your time on this issue.