

## WRITTEN-ONLY Testimony

Chairman Olson and Committee Members,

Thank you for your dedication to our great state and allowing a hearing on Senate Bill 560. As a proud Kansan, I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the proposed legislation. I am a lifelong Topekan and come from a family of educators, farmers and civil servants. As an appointed volunteer member, it has been an honor serving the Industrial Hemp Advisory Board since the program's inception. In 2018 I spoke at World Hemp Congress in Ljubljana, Slovenia about historical document discoveries regarding cannabis and Kansas. Among others, I hold certificates in Drug Policy from University of Geneva, and Medical Cannabis for Pain Control from Technion, Israel's Institute for Technology. I am grateful to have been involved over the past seven years in efforts to update laws by co-authoring introduced bills and amendments in the legislature. And I am more than happy to provide further insight and data as the state moves to abolish racist, failed and nonscientific, zero tolerance drug laws including those pertaining to cannabis. Despite what a select few would like you to believe, please know there is strong support behind you in this decision from numerous disciplines.<sup>1,2</sup>

Before providing recommendations, I am excited to briefly share about previously unknown Kansas history I was lucky to uncover. It was accomplished through archival data research at K-State's Hale Library and interlibrary loans between the State Library of Kansas and University of Illinois. (I will share full-text publications to anyone upon request.) The most important aspect to understand is that hemp studies were conducted during the 1960s and 70s through America's first land grant college, Kansas State University, and the research was foundational for the very laws being addressed today through SB560. I first became aware of this in the 1990s when my father told me he was a volunteer student for research projects while earning a biology degree at K-State. Those lost studies and connected artifacts are summarized in attached images. They demonstrate how Kansas became the first state to systematically eradicate - and one of the last to legalize - one of humanity's most widely used plants.

Through my investigation process, I found out Kansas was the first state in the nation to implement a specific kind of hemp eradication program (or what authorities claimed to be "marijuana"); even before the federal Controlled Substances Act was passed. The inherently biased program was funded by President Nixon's Justice Department and overseen by a representative with Eli Lilly, the global pharmaceutical conglomerate and manufacturer of cannabis-based products prior to it being removed from the US Pharmacopeia in 1942.<sup>3</sup> Given an expanding body of available evidence about cannabis' properties and social impacts, it is encouraging to finally see state laws updated to reflect scientifically-rigorous information, acceptance of benefits, and ethical risk reduction practices.

In the spirit of accomplishing what is intended and necessary to begin a Kansas solution I wish to offer the following recommendations. It is the opinion of other subject matter experts, and my understanding, that a program would be improved by ensuring these frameworks are incorporated:

- According to sources<sup>4-10</sup>, potential issues can be prevented by not limiting access within statute and is especially vital in sparsely populated counties. Simply put: if access is limited, illicit markets can more easily thrive while state revenue suffers. Also to this end, there are multiple models of taxation to be considered, and most current data from other states can be provided.
- To support patients and medical providers, if home cultivation is not allowed for registered applicants, an important provision will be to establish immediate reciprocity for patients from Kansas and other states. Recommendation lists should also be aligned with neighboring states'

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programs for the myriad of conditions which cannabis has been deemed a safe and effective therapy, including definitions within the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Testing analytics and labeling requirements for cannabis is paramount to ensure safe products are reaching patients; in fact it is one of the main arguments for legalization. We cannot know what we do not measure. Therefore, establishing protocols must be in place prior to a program go-live for a state reference lab and others performing analytical services with comprehensive capabilities to test potency, ingredients, contamination, etc. To this end, active bill HB2708 can accomplish this, and I have provided amendments to include hemp products to simultaneously resolve issues with them currently sold statewide.

I am grateful to belong to a statewide, national and global community of leaders who regularly share data, resources and challenges towards reaching consistent knowledge and standards with cannabis. Contrary to what some may fear, based on available evidence, not only are there exponential therapeutic opportunities Kansas citizens will benefit from by reintroducing protections for the plant, but the number of positive ancillary and economic impacts are also abundant. While it is true cannabis may not be for everyone, effects of legalizing and decriminalizing cannabis include the much-needed reframing of substance use away from punishment and criminalization, towards public health and safety. This is imperative to engage and empower through education to reduce harm. Will there be unintended outcomes? Yes, perhaps some can be expected. Will it be an evolution and exercise in continuous improvement? Yes, and that is what all sound policy must be...and it needs to include everyone. I respectfully and strongly urge you to protect the common good by putting the lives of Kansans' first, and vote to enact medicinal cannabis reforms in the 2022 session.

Thank you & please feel free to reach out anytime,  
- Kelly Rippel

### References:

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