

March 15, 2023  
SB 135, Proponent  
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Chairman Thompson and fellow Committee Members,

I am a Kansas resident and member of Kansas' business community submitting this testimony for your consideration in support of legalizing medical marijuana in Kansas.

### **Marijuana is Safe for Certain Medical Uses**

To date, there have been no recorded deaths attributable to marijuana overdose. It is predicted (but not tested for obvious reasons) that a 155-pound person would need 4000 milligrams of THC in their bloodstream to reach lethal levels of toxicity. This is an amount that would be either rejected or processed out of a person's system well before reaching lethal levels. In contrast, in 2020 there were 56,516 deaths from opioid overdose in the United States, one-quarter of which were from prescription opioids. Medical studies are conclusive that sleeping pill use is associated with excess mortality risk, with one study estimating 300,000 to 500,000 U.S. deaths per year associated with sleeping pill use. Marijuana is shown to alleviate both chronic pain and insomnia and, as stated above, there has never been a single documented death caused by marijuana overdose unlike opioids or sleeping pills. Long-term marijuana use does not result in debilitating physical withdrawals that typically accompany pharmaceutical drugs and further compounds these drugs' addictive qualities. In addition to being effective at treating mild to moderate pain and as a sleeping aid, medical evidence indicates that medical marijuana is also effective as a treatment for chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, and for spasticity associated with multiple sclerosis, arthritis, Tourette's syndrome, and PTSD. Furthermore, a recent study from Oregon State University indicates that certain compounds found in marijuana (CBDA and CBGA) are effective at preventing COVID-19 from entering human cells by binding to the COVID-19 spike protein.

Although marijuana may have numerous health benefits, it is not a cure-all and may have negative effects under certain circumstances. For instance, marijuana inhalation by smoking is associated with increased heart attack and stroke risk due to vasoconstriction (but smoking marijuana is prohibited in this bill). Marijuana may also have an adverse effect on adolescent brain development, and should not be used by patients diagnosed with or having a family history of schizophrenia. Marijuana may not be the right treatment for all patients, but it is a benign alternative treatment compared to many commonly prescribed drugs for which the side-effects are often worse than the symptoms they are treating.

### **Substantial Economic Benefit for Kansans**

There were \$30.6 billion in legal marijuana sales in the United States in 2021, and sales are projected to reach over \$62.1 billion by 2026. Kansas is one of just twelve states without a medical or recreational program. Three of our neighboring states have legalized marijuana for either medical or recreational use, and they are experiencing significant economic benefit resulting from legalization. In 2021, Colorado received \$423 million in tax and license fee revenue flowing from \$2.2 billion in total marijuana sales. Oklahoma received \$150 million in tax and license fee

revenue in 2021. Missouri marijuana sales in 2021 topped \$200 million, and it has been reported that 1 in 10 newly created jobs in 2021 in Missouri were in the marijuana industry. The economic impact of legalizing marijuana goes beyond the marijuana sales numbers reported by these states. Legal marijuana brings new profits to a multitude of professional services and industries, including agriculture, construction, real estate, accounting, and marketing to name a few. This is a new industry creating new revenue for our State, and the profits flowing from marijuana sales will continue to circulate within Kansas and even improve the lives of Kansans who may never use marijuana.

Kansas would need to offer millions of dollars in incentives to draw an out of state business here to create the same level of new revenue and employment. Our state would require years of incremental growth in various current industries to equal the revenue that the legal and regulated marijuana market could provide. This legislation will improve the quality of life for Kansans across the board, from hundreds of millions in new revenue in the state and thousands of new jobs available for our citizens.

### **Kansas Has Learned From the Mistakes of Other States**

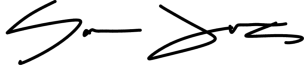
This bill is the culmination of a thoughtful and collaborative process by legislators and industry experts to ensure that Kansas legalizes marijuana the right way. Kansas' conservative approach to legalization has allowed this bill to carefully address those issues that other states got wrong with their marijuana legalization, so that Kansas can do it right.

This bill addresses a number of concerns Kansans had regarding marijuana legalization, including:

- Clear guidance for law enforcement relating to apparent possession of marijuana during a traffic stop;
- Penalties for parents who carelessly store their marijuana in a place that is accessible by minors;
- Prohibiting packaging that would be attractive to children and ensuring that marijuana products are contained in child-resistant packaging;
- Requiring dispensaries to engage a pharmacist consultant to advise on correct application and dosing of marijuana products, as well as provide oversight for potential misuse of marijuana products by patients;
- Residency requirements for businesses to ensure that profits flowing from the marijuana industry remain in our State;
- High business licensing fees to ensure that the State's marijuana regulatory agency is fully-funded and equipped to regulate the industry at its inception;
- Implementation of a seed-to-sale tracking system and strict security requirements for businesses to prevent legally grown and processed marijuana products from being sold on the black market;
- Prohibitions on public advertising by marijuana businesses; and
- Restricting the proximity of a marijuana business to a school, church, public library, or public park.

With the foregoing in mind, I respectfully ask that you vote in support of legalizing medical marijuana in Kansas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

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Sam Jones, Chief Operating Officer  
Kansas Natural Remedies