

Thomas Gordon, President, Silver Hair Legislature:

March 28, 2024

Kansas State Senate Federal and State Committee

In Person Testimony: Opponent

Senate Bill 555: Creating the medical cannabis pilot program act to establish the medical cannabis pilot program for limited cultivation, processing and dispensing of medical cannabis and medical cannabis products.

The mission and the purpose of the Silver Haired Legislature is to advocate and educate our constituents. We do not FOCUS on individuals, special interest groups or partisans, we focus on the issues and support legislation concerning the welfare of our constituents.

There is no “I” in democracy; There is no “I” in team.

There is an “I” and an a “N” in elections; with the objective is to be elected to serve the voting constituents; which equates you are in alignment with the will of your constituents, or this is the end of a relationship.

Good morning committee. My name is Thomas Gordon, and I am president of the Silver Haired Legislature for the state of Kansas. I would like to offer quasi neutral testimony for SB – 555; predicated on the entirety of this testimony. There are 650,000 seniors in the state of Kansas, and a sizable portion of them could benefit using medical marijuana for chronic illnesses and pain. Currently medical cannabis is not available in the State of Kansas however we the Silver Haired Legislature would like to see medical cannabis responsibly available in Kansas. We have suggestions that is supported by SHL in our 41st Annual Session (Resolution 4008 – Establish a Medical Cannabis Advisory Board in Order to Explore and Make Recommendations Regarding the Expanded Use of Cannabis) that we think would make SB 555 even better. We think that an advisory board is not only an improvement to the bill but is essential to ensuring the successful implementation of medical marijuana in our state.

I wish to express our organization’s sincere concerns about SB 555. This bill aims to establish an extremely limited Pilot Program. As a member of the Kansas Silver Hair Legislature, this proposed legislation poses significant risks and challenges that must be carefully considered before moving forward.

First and foremost, SB 555 fails to adequately address the concerns and needs of our senior population. While the legalization of medical cannabis may have potential benefits for certain individuals, it also raises fundamental questions about public health and safety,

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particularly among older adults who may be more vulnerable to the adverse effects of cannabis use.

Furthermore, the lack of provisions for comprehensive oversight and regulation is deeply concerning. Without proper oversight mechanisms in place, there is a risk of abuse and misuse of medical cannabis, as well as potential negative impacts on our communities, including increased substance abuse and inconsistent medical cannabis medicine.

Considering these concerns, I strongly believe that a Medical Cannabis Oversight Committee is crucial to the responsible implementation of any medical cannabis legalization efforts in Kansas. Such a committee would play a vital role in monitoring the implementation of the legislation, evaluating its impact on public health and safety, and making recommendations for adjustments or improvements as needed.

Moreover, an oversight committee would ensure transparency and accountability in the regulatory process, helping to safeguard against potential conflicts of interest and ensuring that the interests of all stakeholders, including the over 650,000 voting seniors, are represented and protected.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider your support for SB 555 and to instead prioritize the establishment of an oversight committee to guide the responsible implementation of medical cannabis legalization in Kansas. Our seniors and communities deserve nothing less than a thoughtful and comprehensive approach that prioritizes their health, safety, and well-being. We are counting on our lawmakers to represent us as legislation is being considered and created.

Thank You for your attention to this matter.

WE the Silver Haired Legislators stand for questions when appropriate.