

House Republicans introduce their own plan for recreational marijuana in Ohio

By Anna Staver
Cleveland.com

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Ohio now has two competing visions for how its recreational marijuana market should operate.

One version, passed by the Senate, would cut home grow limits and ban people from sharing what they cultivate.

The other, introduced in the House on Thursday, sticks closer to what voters passed in November 2023 and seeks to put new limits on intoxicating hemp.

"I think home grow was an important part people were considering when they voted," said state Rep. Brian Stewart, a Centerville Republican.

His legislation, [House Bill 160](#), would:

- Keep the voter approved plant limits at six per person and 12 per household.
- Keep grow limits for Ohio's largest cultivators at 100,000 square feet.
- Keep state sales taxes at 10%
- Allow people to smoke anywhere on their residential property and share what they grow while friends visit.
- Keep the "host community cannabis fund" for localities that haven't banned dispensaries. But 20% sales taxes would go into this fund instead of the 36% voters approved.
- Define and regulate the sale of intoxicating hemp products.

"I think there is a core of what voters made clear that they wanted," Stewart said.

Ohio voters legalized adult use marijuana in November 2023 via state Issue 2. It passed with 57% of the vote and in [traditionally conservative counties](#) like Butler, Medina and Ashtabula. Dispensaries started selling adult-use recreational marijuana in August.

But Issue 2 was a statute, not a state constitutional amendment, which means lawmakers could cut, change or add anything they want.

And that's what Senate Republicans did [earlier this month](#).

State Sen. Steve Huffman, a Miami County, Republican sponsored [Senate Bill 56](#).

The legislation didn't touch intoxicating hemp or how cannabis gets taxed. But it would significantly alter how marijuana is grown, shared and sold.

The bill cut the number of plants a household could grow from 12 to 6. It also outlawed sharing what you grow, banned outdoor smoking and created potential criminal penalties for renters caught smoking in violation of their lease.

When it came to growing marijuana, SB 56 eliminated licenses for smaller growers and cut the total square footage of Ohio's largest cultivators.

"It's not to do away with the ballot initiative," Huffman said when he introduced SB 56. "It's to work around the edges to make it better."

The House and Senate will have to coalesce around a single plan if they want it to become law. But Stewart and Huffman aren't at odds on everything.

Both bills cap the total number of dispensaries in Ohio at 350. They both tighten the rules for packaging and how products get marketed. Both bills limit the potency of extracts at 70% with the option to get approval to go higher.

"I think the Senate has done good work on some of these areas," Stewart said.

And even though Huffman split intoxicating hemp into standalone Senate legislation, the two lawmakers have nearly identical plans for how it should be regulated.

"Simply put," Stewart said, "If it gets you high, it goes through a dispensary."

Senate Bill 86 and HB 160 both define any THC product as intoxicating if it contains more than 0.3%. And they both say those products can only be sold in licensed marijuana dispensaries.

OHCANN, Ohio's leading cannabis trade association, called Stewart's bill another step in the right direction.

“Our concern really was the tax moving up. We don’t want to see higher prices for consumers,” Executive Director Adrienne Robbins said. But overall this new plan is “a really positive step forward.”