



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Testimony Opposing House Bill 1164

Jacob Thomsen, Policy Analyst
North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action
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Good morning Chairman Weisz and honorable members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Jacob Thomsen and I am a Policy Analyst with North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action. I am testifying on behalf of our organization in opposition to House Bill 1164 and respectfully request that you render a "DO NOT PASS" on this bill.

Our organization, and its constituents, are opposed to legalization of marijuana in all forms and do not support the expansion of marijuana consumption. This bill proposes an expansion of medical marijuana as edibles, and therefore we are opposed to it on principle. However, medical marijuana is legal, and we realize this.

If this bill was to move forward, our biggest concern would be that edibles could get in the hands of children. The statistics are sobering, even in states with safety measures in place. Calls to poison control centers for young children (5 and under) inadvertently consuming edibles containing THC rose 1,375% (207 cases to 3,054) over the years from 2017 to 2021. Further, 97% of these children found the edibles at home. Ingesting these marijuana edibles can clearly cause serious health problems for these young children.

"Confusion, hallucinations, fast heart rate and vomiting, experts said.

In severe cases, children can experience trouble breathing or even comas.

The severity usually depends on children's size and age and how much cannabis they've consumed." – NBC NEWS

I understand that the sponsors have put in certain safety measures to prevent this from happening, such as child proof containers and unenticing shapes and colors. While we maintain that the safest course of action would be to not pass this bill, we would like to thank the sponsor for being amenable to discussing some additional ideas that our organization put forward.

There are already plenty of ways that medical marijuana is administered. Smoking is obviously

1515 Burnt Boat Dr., Suite C-148, Bismarck, ND 58503
mark@ndfamilyalliance.org
701-355-6425
www.ndfamilyalliance.org

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not the healthiest way to do this. It is our understanding that this is part of the reason that this bill exists. However, there are other options. Cannabinoid solution, cannabinoid capsule, cannabinoid transdermal patch, and cannabinoid topical are all solutions that currently exist for the distribution of medical marijuana.

Another argument for production of edibles is that the solutions that currently exist for medical marijuana “don’t taste good” However, this actually minimizes the chance of accidental ingestion by children. Unfortunately, the reverse is also true. If they taste good, and a child gets ahold of them, the child will very likely eat them, leading to any number of the previously stated side effects. The child is also more likely to eat the entire package of edibles if they taste good, leading to more severe side effects. We greatly appreciate that the sponsor indicated a willingness to add to the bill the requirement of making the edibles “unsweetened” or “not sweetened” to avoid this potentially dangerous situation.

In addition to the possible harm to children, this bill concerns us due to the removal of the written certification from a bona fide provider-patient relationship. This could create much greater demand for cannabinoid products, as is indicated in the fiscal note.

Bringing cannabinoid edible products into a home poses a threat to the safety of any children that may live there or visit. Our organization and its constituents feel that this issue is best taken care of by not allowing the products to legally exist in the state. For these reasons, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action respectfully requests that you render a “DO NOT PASS” on House Bill 1164.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I am happy to stand for any questions.