



Dear Ohio Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of Ohio's 479 financial institutions collectively represented by the Ohio Credit Union League (OCUL) and Ohio Bankers League (OBL), we are respectfully requesting your consideration in cosponsoring H.R. 1996, the Secure and Fair Enforcement (SAFE) Banking Act, to address the challenges of providing financial services for cannabis-related businesses.

Cannabis became legally available to purchase for medicinal use in the State of Ohio in January 2019. State regulators most recent figures on medical marijuana sales report almost 40,000 pounds of product sold since March 2021, totaling over \$338 million.¹ Such an expansive movement of hard currency has created a public safety crisis for Ohio communities. Due to the confusion in law, much of that \$338 million in cash is physically carried or placed in unsecured locations, such as safes and under mattresses, around the state.

OBL and OCUL member institutions of all sizes are caught in the middle of a conflict between state and federal law. Some state and local entities are encouraging Ohio financial institutions to bank cannabis businesses, yet federal law expressly bans doing so. H.R. 1996 takes the important first step toward allowing cannabis-related businesses to legally, and more readily, access financial services and the electronic banking system. It would importantly require federal banking regulators to provide clarity on how to bank these entities in a safe and sound matter. Additionally, it would provide a safe harbor for financial institutions to bring cannabis-related businesses into the modern-day financial system for critical auditing purposes.

In the 116th Congress, the SAFE Banking Act passed the U.S. House of Representatives on a strong bipartisan vote of 321-103. We want to thank Congressmen Warren Davidson and Steve Stivers for their leadership in crafting and sponsoring this bill. We respectfully urge support in cosponsoring the bill and voting in favor of H.R. 1996 when it moves to the House floor.

The passage of H.R. 1996 will help Ohio's banks and credit unions navigate the difficult regulatory conundrum surrounding cannabis banking. We appreciate your careful consideration and look forward to further dialogue on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Michael J. Adelman.

Michael J. Adelman
President & CEO, Ohio Bankers League

A blue ink signature of Paul L. Mercer.

Paul L. Mercer
President, Ohio Credit Union League

¹ <https://www.medicalmarijuana.ohio.gov/Documents/ProgramUpdate/program%20update.pdf>