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APRIL 4, 2026

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COURT GRANTS TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER BLOCKING OHIO SENATE BILL 56 ENFORCEMENT

COLUMBUS, OH - Statesman Limited today announced that the Sandusky County Court of Common Pleas has granted a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) blocking enforcement of Ohio Senate Bill 56, a law that would have effectively handed a monopoly on hemp product sales in Ohio to the state's licensed marijuana dispensaries at the direct expense of federally legal hemp businesses across Ohio and the nation.

Issued on March 24, 2026 by Judge Jeremiah S. Ray, the TRO in North Fork Distribution I, LLC v. Derek Wensinger, et al. (Case No. 26 CV 312) prohibits state defendants and all acting in concert with them from taking any adverse, punitive, or governmental action whether criminal, civil, administrative, or regulatory against hemp businesses operating in compliance with federal law.

"This is a decisive victory for Ohio's hemp industry and for the rule of law," said Dakota Sawyer, CEO of Statesman Limited. "Senate Bill 56 was a blatant attempt to rig the market in favor of a politically connected industry by criminalizing a federally legal product. Judge Ray saw through it, and our clients can now return to doing what they do best serving Ohio consumers with legal, quality hemp products."

A Law Built to Protect Monopoly, Not Consumers

As the court found, S.B. 56 functioned as a protectionist measure that immunized Ohio's in-state marijuana dispensary industry which Ohio law already requires to maintain a physical in-state presence from competition by federally legal hemp businesses, including thousands of Ohio-based

producers, distributors, and retailers. Out-of-state hemp cultivators and processors were shut out of the Ohio market entirely under the new law.

The court determined that the dormant Commerce Clause challenge is likely to succeed on the merits, finding that S.B. 56 discriminated against interstate commerce on its face. As the order noted, possession or sale of hemp products under S.B. 56 could generate felony charges, while materially identical products sold by the favored class of licensed dispensaries would be entirely legal a distinction the court found inherently discriminatory.

Additional Litigation: A Multi-Front Legal Challenge

The Sandusky County TRO is not the only legal challenge threatening the survival of Senate Bill 56. Separate litigation has been filed in Franklin County and is also pending before the Tenth District Court of Appeals. While the Sandusky County case centers on the constitutional infirmities of S.B. 56's substance particularly its discrimination against interstate commerce in violation of the dormant Commerce Clause the Franklin County and Tenth District proceedings take a fundamentally different approach, attacking the procedural method by which Senate Bill 56 was passed. Those cases raise serious questions about whether the legislation was enacted in accordance with Ohio's constitutional requirements for the passage of law, presenting an independent and potentially dispositive basis for invalidating the bill entirely.

Together, these cases represent a broad and coordinated legal assault on Senate Bill 56 from multiple directions and multiple courts a reflection of just how deeply flawed this legislation was from its inception.

"Our opponents passed a bad bill badly," Sawyer said. "The courts are now being asked to address not only what this law does, but how it was even put on the books. We are confident that the legal system will continue to deliver the right results."

About Statesman Limited

Statesman Limited is a Columbus-based strategic communications, government affairs, and advocacy firm operating across Ohio, Michigan, and beyond. Statesman serves a diverse portfolio of clients across industries including hemp, energy, healthcare, and public policy through its affiliated brands, including American Republic Policy.

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