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House of Representatives

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Ranking Member Jamie Raskin
Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services
Hearing on “Hemp in the Modern World: The Yearslong Wait for FDA Action”
July 27, 2023

Good afternoon and thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

Last year, when the former Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties held a bipartisan hearing on cannabis reform, my esteemed colleague, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, said to, “check to see if there are pigs growing wings in this country.” It seems we need to do that again, because once more we have managed to find bipartisan consensus, and this time, on the need for reasonable regulation.

While this hearing is focused on hemp, it’s part of a sweeping movement for cannabis policy reform. Earlier today, Congresswoman Mace and I introduced our bipartisan Cannabis User’s Restoration of Eligibility Act, or the CURE Act.

Our bill would remove prior marijuana use as an obstacle to passing the federal security clearance process. It would also allow for someone who was previously denied security clearance or a federal job opportunity to get that denial reviewed.

This policy is imperative and long overdue. Most states have reformed their marijuana laws, but the federal prohibition of marijuana continues to act as a professional guillotine for hundreds of thousands of Americans who are being denied security clearances and federal job opportunities.

I want to thank Ms. Mace for her collaboration on this bill and we look forward to moving it through this Committee with the help of Chairman Comer.

Turning back to federal regulations for hemp and its derivatives, it is important that we take the same commonsense approach to these regulations.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [released a statement](#) earlier this year explaining that current regulatory frameworks for foods and supplements are not appropriate for cannabidiol, or CBD, one of the biggest hemp-derivatives. FDA explained that the regulatory frameworks may not be sufficient for managing risk and conducting appropriate oversight for CBD products.

I agree with my colleagues that we need reasonable regulation of the hemp and hemp-derivative marketplace to protect consumers and ensure that good actors in the hemp industry can grow their businesses. But we need to make sure those new regulations make sense.

A vast world of hemp derivatives is flourishing, beyond just CBD. Among these derivatives are newly-developed synthetic cannabinoids, including delta-8 THC, which can have intoxicating effects when

consumed. Without regulations, companies can synthesize these intoxicants from legal hemp and evade regulatory scrutiny and federal marijuana laws, sending products to market without proper testing, labeling, or other safety precautions.

Hemp-derivative products can come in all sorts of different forms—they cannot be easily or always categorized as food or supplements. These products can be oils, tinctures, vape pens and cigarettes, and even cosmetics and skincare.

The FDA realistically cannot regulate the entire world of hemp and its derivatives without additional research, authorities, and resources. I invite my Republican colleagues to work with us to figure out the proper path forward to regulate hemp and its derivatives, so that we can protect our constituents and provide a more effective framework for industry.

Thank you and I yield back.

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