



South Dakota (2026) Testimony opposing repealing access to higher strength medical cannabis products

I want to thank the distinguished members of this Committee for providing me with the opportunity to testify.

My name is Paul Armentano. I am testifying to you today as the Deputy Director of NORML – the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws. NORML is a public interest group that advocates on behalf of those patients and others who use cannabis responsibly.

I am the author of several books on cannabis, health, and public safety and my writing on marijuana has been featured in over two dozen academic anthologies. One of my books, *Clinical Applications for Cannabis & Cannabinoids: A Review of the Recent Scientific Literature*, summarizes over 450 peer-reviewed studies assessing the safety and efficacy of cannabis and cannabinoids in over 20 distinct patient populations. It has been translated into multiple languages.

I have appeared as a court-certified expert witness on matters specific to the medicinal use of cannabis. I also helped create a curriculum that is required training in several states for physicians who wish to issue medical cannabis recommendations.

I urge you to please vote 'no' on SB 194, which repeals patients' access to higher-strength medical cannabis products.

Seriously ill patients require products with a wide range of potency. Prohibiting patients from accessing higher potency products from state-licensed retailers will not eliminate their need for them. Rather, it will encourage patients to seek out high-THC products in the unregulated market. It will also move the production of these products exclusively underground. This undermines the primary goal of medical cannabis legalization, which is to provide patients with safe, above-ground access to lab-tested products of known purity, potency, and quality.

Medical cannabis patients deserve access to cannabis in a variety of formulations and potencies so that they can best tailor specific products to their own individual needs. Do not take these options away from them.

For these reasons, I ask you to please reject Senate Bill 194.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.