Testimony of Fine Fettle Dispensary
Re: S.B. No. 16 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADULT USE OF CANNABIS
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing, March 2, 2020

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas and Esteemed Members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in regards to Senate Bill 16- An Act Concerning the Adult Use of Cannabis.

Fine Fettle Dispensary is a locally owned dispensary organization with locations in Newington and Willimantic. Our team is built of Connecticut residents and alumni of schools, Universities, and Pharmacy Schools across our great state. We are proud to be the first CT-based cannabis company to expand beyond Connecticut, recently being approved to dispense in Massachusetts and Cultivate/Process is Rhode Island. We are a group who believes in being both diverse and local. One of our dispensary managers is born in Puerto Rico and the other is a first generation Korean-American. Our staff is local to the communities in which we are located with diverse backgrounds and the ability to reach our patients in their native language.

With regards to Senate Bill 16, we believe this is on the right path towards legalization, but misses key aspects of speed to market, equity, supply, and necessary oversight.

We will address these four topics:

**Speed to Market:** In Illinois, the only state to pass recreational cannabis through the legislation, their bill was passed on June 25, 2019 and recreational cannabis sales began January 1, 2020. Their first month of sales netted $10 million in tax revenue for the state. In our bill, the legalization is pushed off nearly 30 months from today. In fact, we currently have the infrastructure to enable legalization through the 17 existing dispensaries and 4 growers. Current medical dispensaries should be allowed to make the choice to operate both medical and recreational, and then get approval from the town and DCP to operate in both capacities. The current bill prioritizes four growers acting as the sole producers with unlimited capacity for expansion but does not actually allow the market to open early through direct sale to customers through the existing, safe, and vetted dispensaries.

**Supply:** Even with Connecticut growers expanding, they cannot supply the needs of a recreational market in Connecticut, especially looking at exorbitant pricing in Massachusetts and no legalization in New York. While the current growers are simply
expanding, this both creates competitive issues and lack of innovation in the product space. The current bill only asks for a study to assess the supply needs of the state. Between an RFP, scoring, building of facilities, and harvest, the process to having product to market is a long endeavor for cultivators. DCP must be provided the funding to immediately commence an RFP for additional cultivators across the state.

**Equity:** In moving forward, there need to be more specifics around equity both on the ownership and community involvement sides. We propose that all current operators must mentor a minority applicant on their application, training on both the technical aspects of writing the application. Additionally, of any new licenses given, a percent should be given to minority and/or previously incarcerated individuals or teams with non-violent drug offenses on their records. Applications for these applicants should come at a reduced price. Lastly, looking at a few “craft grow” or “producer” licenses will allow low capex options for better sustainability and ability to get to market for such applicants.

**Oversight:** DCP does an excellent job overseeing the country’s best medical program. However, in our program, much of the processes are manual and only encompass 40,000 residents across the state. In this bill, DCP must receive the necessary funding and staffing to implement technological advances for tracking and safety of cultivation, production, and sales, the ability to hire a firm to complete a fair and efficient RFP process, and agents to ensure safety and consistency of the program once implanted.

Overall, we believe this bill is a start in the right direction but needs more specifics in its implementation and speed to market to bring revenue to the state and these products to the people.