

# General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6855

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION'S  
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING DRUG CONTROL AND CANNABIS,

**Title:** HEMP AND INFUSED BEVERAGE REGULATION.

**Vote Date:** 3/24/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/14/2025

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

General Law Committee (per request from the Department of Consumer Protection)

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

Proposed Substitute Bill No 6855 (LCO No. 6756) intends to provide modifications, clarifications, and additions regarding current state statutes as they relate to drug control, hemp, marijuana, and infused beverages. The Department of Consumer Protection asked the General Law Committee to raise this bill to protect the health and safety of consumers and patients, support the Connecticut cannabis industry, and reduce burdens on department operations and the cannabis industry. Both the raised bill and the proposed substitute seek to enhance DCP's ability to ensure access to safe prescription drug supply while simultaneously supporting and streamlining Connecticut's growing cannabis industry.

## **SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:**

Proposed Substitute Bill No. 6855 (LCO No. 6756) was amended in committee to strike the brackets and the new language in section 20, line 793, and to allow LCO to make technical and conforming changes, as the committee agreed that the child proof tabs on infused beverages placed excessive and unnecessary burdens on manufacturers.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

[Bryan Cafferelli, Commissioner, Department of Consumer Protection](#) supports passage of this legislation. He testified that this bill would: help ensure that Connecticut residents have safe access to prescription medication supplies, provide the DCP drug control division with more efficient licensing and monitoring oversight, and help the growing cannabis industry in

Connecticut. He outlines the changes that the bill makes to cannabis policy and drug control statutes in his written testimony.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

[Rep. Tracy Marra, Dist. 141, State Representative, Connecticut General Assembly](#) supports this bill as a measure to classify Kratom and its derivatives as scheduled substances. She describes her growing concern regarding the adulteration of kratom products, which are synthetically altered to have heightened opioid effects, that are being advertised and sold to minors.

[Steve Nyerick, President, Southington STEPS](#) supports this bill as it relates to the limiting of kratom sales in the state of Connecticut.

[Ray Pantalena, Pharmacist, Affinity Dispensary](#) submitted testimony in support of HB 6855 regarding the act allowing pharmacists to qualify patients for the medical marijuana program.

[Paige Tierinni, Senior, Southington High School STEPS Youth Council](#) submitted testimony in support of this bill as it relates to regulating kratom. She states that unregulated kratom products are putting youth at risk, and that if access to the substance was limited to ages 21+, it would greatly benefit the community.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

[Walker Gallman, Legislative Director, Global Kratom Coalition](#) opposes this bill as it includes kratom products in the scheduling category along with unapproved synthetic drugs. They believe that kratom is a natural botanical and is safe for use. By adding it to the controlled substance list, he believes it would be countering the science and be a setback for consumers.

[Andrew Kulpa, Botanicals for Better Health](#) opposes this bill as it adds kratom and its alkaloid mitragyna speciosa as a scheduled drug. He states that there is an abundance of scientific data that shows that botanicals can be safely distributed and used in the marketplace. He believes that prohibition of this makes more room for bad actors and illegal products to be found in the marketplace.

[Michael Goodenough, Hemp Farmer and Manufacturing, DG AgTek LLC Sweetheat](#) opposes HB 6855 in its current form. In his testimony, he describes his belief that the regulations on the hemp industry are restrictive and damaging to farmers and businesses across the state.

[Duncan Markovich, Founder and Owner, Better Ways LLC](#) opposes HB 6855 due to his belief that passage would help large multi-state corporations rather than local Connecticut hemp businesses, communities, and farmers. He continues, stating that the state has overregulated the CBD industry with costs, excessive rules on products, and enforcement funding.

[Ann Marie Rosado, Founder, Higher Heath LLC](#) submitted testimony in opposition to the bill. She describes the allowance for pharmacists to supply temporary medical marijuana cards as irresponsible, as pharmacists are not clinicians.

[Kirk Wesley, Social Equity Owner, Affinity Dispensary](#) opposes this legislation. He believes this bill does not help social equity operators in the state, but rather large multi-state corporations. He also states that the twenty-mile restriction was a crucial safeguard against market instability and oversaturation, and by removing it, will similarly only harm small operators.

[Gordon Whelpley, Founder/CEO, Float House](#) opposes this bill, specifically as it relates to infused beverages regulation. He states that the addition of infused beverage safety caps is expensive and difficult to source, and unfairly targets and burdens the infused beverage industry.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS:**

### **Requesting Amendments:**

[Curt Cameron, President, Thomas Hooker Brewery and Muse Seltzers](#)

[Shirley Weldon, THC Drink Company](#)

[Chris Weldon, THC Drink Company](#)

These three THC drink company owners submitted nearly identical testimony in opposition to HB 6855. First, they state that there is no need for child-resistant caps on infused beverages, as it is statistically irrelevant to consider, and would financially and operationally burden manufacturers. This was addressed in the substitute language. They also recommend that taxes are reduced per case of infused beverage and increase potency limits. Additionally, Shirley and Chris ask the legislature to consider allowing on-premises sales of infused beverages.

[The Connecticut Hospital Association](#) submitted testimony with general comments regarding the proposed bill. They state that sections 2 and 3 place additional regulatory controls on nonresident pharmacies upon dispensing compounded sterile medications. They ask that the legislature move the implementation date to July 1, 2026, to allow time for current providers to verify that out-of-state pharmacies will have enough time to alter their practices to comply with the statutes, or enough time to find other providers.

[The Connecticut Medical Cannabis Council](#) submitted testimony providing general comments regarding HB 6855. They first ask that the exemption expiration or limiting its extension is capped at 12 months; this section was removed in the proposed substitute bill. They also ask to amend the minimum days prior to the effective date of new policy or procedure allow for 90 days for procedure and 180 days' notice for changes in packaging or labelling. Additionally, they ask that automatic extensions for patient certifications be granted if they qualify without requiring dispensaries to take on the expenses and liability exposure of keeping confidential health records of patients. They offer other amendments for Section 17, 18, and 20 in their testimony.

[Jacob Honig, Co-owner, CBGGurus LLC](#), provided general comments and requested amendments to the current marijuana and hemp statutes in Connecticut. He recommended the legislature:

1. Modify existing language on high-THC hemp products, manufactured cannabinoids, synthetic cannabinoids, and marijuana to ensure hemp and other products are not considered marijuana or controlled substances.
2. Need language to ensure mid-process extracts are legal for growers to possess, and are not considered marijuana
3. Ensure that all final products that are intended for consumption are safe under the current regulatory framework.

He includes more objectives that can be found in his testimony.

[Fine Fettle Dispensary](#) submitted testimony with general comments regarding the cannabis industry and current statutes. They state that they oppose sections 12-14 that seek to eliminate the twenty-mile radius restriction for new Equity Joint Ventures with like-ownership. They believe that the rule was designed to create geographic and market diversity. By ridding of the provision, it would reward operators who have not invested under the current framework, increase market clustering in certain areas and thus decrease accessibility, favor larger operations rather than small businesses, and violate the state's social equity goals. Fine Fettle Dispensary recommends amending the currently proposed statutes to include the twenty-mile rule again.

[Rino Ferrarese, Co-Owner, Affinity Grow](#) submitted testimony with recommendations for the committee to consider. First, that the committee to preserve laboratory-controlled sampling, and maintain fair and accurate cannabis testing. To do this, he recommends:

1. Require laboratory personnel to collect samples directly from the batch
2. Implement a stratified sampling approach (Intermediate Bulk Testing)
3. Align with ASTM, AOAC, and/or ISO standards to establish a valid testing method before deeming it mandatory.

Charles White, Chair, Kratom Consumer Advisory Council submitted testimony in general support, except for the placing of kratom on the controlled substances list. His testimony entails a historic account of the opioid crisis and kratom's use as an alternative to help ween consumers off the strong addiction of opioids. He states that while kratom is not risk free, regulation to:

1. Reduce harm to children
2. Ban semi-synthetic or synthetic alkaloids
3. Label each product transparently
4. Pre-register products with proof of manufacturing quality

Is a superior public health strategy than a full-on kratom ban.

**Reported by: Michael Flynn**

**Date: 3/28/2025**