

July 2, 2024

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman, Senate Agriculture Committee
U.S. Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member, Agriculture Committee
U.S. Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman, Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson
Chairman, Agriculture Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Scott
Ranking Member, Agriculture Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1010 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Boozman, Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Collins, Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Scott, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We the undersigned organizations representing national and state public health, medical, law enforcement, consumer protection organizations and the families that are being mentally and physically harmed are writing to support Representative Mary Miller’s (R-IL-15th) amendment to the 2024 Farm Bill that was voted favorably out of the House Agriculture Committee on May 23. This language changes the definition of hemp to specifically exclude semi-synthetic cannabinoids that have similar effects to delta-9 THC and closes other unintended loopholes that have allowed the proliferation of other highly intoxicating hemp products. We respectfully request that this language be protected as the Farm Bill moves through regular order in the House or in pre-conference negotiations between the House and Senate. We also strongly support the identical language included in the House FY 2025 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

The definition of hemp in the 2018 Farm Bill has been interpreted by the hemp industry as “legalizing” semi-synthetic cannabinoids (e.g., delta-8 THC, delta-10 THC, HHC, THC-O, etc.) that have similar effects as delta-9 THC.¹⁻² These products have caused major investigative and testing challenges as well as scores of unseen

¹ LoParco, C.R., Rossheim, M.E., Walters, S.T., Zhou, Z., Olsson, S., & Sussman, S. (2023). Delta-8 tetrahydrocannabinol: a scoping review and commentary. *Addiction*, 118(6):1011–28. doi: 10.1111/add.16142 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36710464/>

² Rossheim, M.E., LoParco, C., Henry, D., Trangenstein, P.J., & Walters, S.T. (2023). Delta-8, Delta-10, HHC, THC-O, THCP, and THCv: What should we call these products? *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*. doi: 10.15288/jsad.23-00008

³ Rossheim, M.E., LoParco, C.R., Tillett, K.K., Treffers, R.D., Livingston, M.D., & Berg, C.J. (2024). Cannabis products in vape shops: United States, 2023. *Research Society on Marijuana (RSMJ)*.

⁴ Rossheim, M.E., Tillett, K.K., Vasilev, V., LoParco, C.R., Berg, C.J., Trangenstein, P.J., Yockey, R.A., Sussman, S.Y., Siegel, M., & Jernigan, D.H. (2024). Types and Brands of Derived Psychoactive Cannabis Products: An Online Retail Assessment, 2023. *Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research*. doi: 10.1089/can.2023.0266

health and safety impacts. Semi-synthetic cannabinoids have proliferated in communities across the country and are sold in gas stations, convenience stores, head shops and online in ways that are purposely made both accessible and attractive to youth.³⁻⁷ These substances are often sold in the form of gummies, chocolates, chips, candies, and cookies.¹⁻⁴ Many of these products display brightly colored cartoon characters and names which are specifically designed to appeal to children such as “Grape Ape”, “Girl Scout Cookie”, “Pineapple Express”, “S’mores Chocolate”, “Space Gods” and “Rainbow Sourbelts”.⁸ Consistent with concerns regarding youth access and appeal, national data from 2023 shows that one-in-nine 12th graders (11.4%) reported using delta-8 THC in the past year.⁹ This is likely an underestimation of their use, considering the dozens of other semi-synthetic cannabinoids in addition to delta-8 THC being sold across the United States.^{2-4,7}

Semi-synthetic cannabinoids are chemically synthesized from the CBD in hemp through processes which result in impurities and dangerous chemicals such as strong acids and heavy metals being left behind in the final product.^{1,10} There have been thousands of calls to U.S. poison control centers from use of these products, more than 30% for children 5 years and younger.¹¹ Research suggests that use of semi-synthetic cannabinoids is associated with acute psychiatric disorders including severe psychosis, and lung, chest, and heart disorders, as well as injuries and poisonings.^{1,11-14} However, we will not know the full extent of their harms for many years.

Trying to regulate semi-synthetic cannabinoids will not work.¹⁻³ These products remain widely available in many states that have tried to ban them.^{3,7} To protect the health and safety of our communities, we need to completely close the federal loophole by explicitly excluding these products from the definition of hemp. These products are continually innovated to circumvent existing regulations, underscoring the urgent need for a comprehensive ban to effectively curtail their availability.¹⁻³

As both the 2024 Farm Bill and the FY 2025 Agricultural, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies appropriations bills move through the legislative process, we strongly recommend that Rep. Mary Miller’s amendment be protected and explicitly included in the final versions of these bills.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for your consideration of our views.

American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAP)
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
American Psychological Association Services, Inc.
Americans Against Legalizing Marijuana
Becca Schmill Foundation

⁵ Egan, K.L., Villani, S., & Soule, E.K. (2023). Absence of Age Verification for Online Purchases of Cannabidiol and Delta-8: Implications for Youth Access. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2023.01.020.

⁶ Rossheim, M.E., LoParco, C.R., Walker, A., Livingston, M.D., Trangenstein, P.J., Olsson, S., McDonald, K.K., Yockey, R.A., Lunningham, J.M., Kong, A.Y., Henry, D., Walters, S.T., Thombs, D.L., & Jernigan, D.H. (2022). Delta-8 THC Retail Availability, Price, and Minimum Purchase Age. *Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research*. doi: 10.1089/can.2022.0079

⁷ LoParco, C.R., Tillett, K.K., Berg, C.J., & Rossheim, M.E. (in press). Online retail of derived psychoactive cannabis products: Age and shipping restrictions. *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

⁸ Partnership to End Addiction. (2023). Delta-8 THC: What you need to know about ‘cannabis light’. <https://drugfree.org/article/delta-8-thc/>

⁹ National Institute of Health. (2023). <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/reported-drug-use-among-adolescents-continued-hold-below-pre-pandemic-levels-2023>

¹⁰ Geci, M., Scialdone, M., & Tishler, J. (2023). The Dark Side of Cannabidiol: The Unanticipated Social and Clinical Implications of Synthetic Δ8-THC. *Cannabis and Cannabinoid Research*. 8:2, 270-282. <https://doi.org/10.1089/can.2022.0126>

¹¹ Burgess, A., Hays, H.L., Badeti, J., Spiller, H.A., Rine, N.I., Gaw, C.E., Ding, K., & Smith, G.A. (2024). Delta-8 tetrahydrocannabinol, delta-10 tetrahydrocannabinol, and tetrahydrocannabinol-O acetate exposures reported to America’s Poison Centers. *Clin Toxicol (Phila)*. 62(4):256-266. doi: 10.1080/15563650.2024.2340115. Epub 2024 Apr 30. PMID: 38686923.

¹² Leas, E.C., Harati, R.M., Satybaldiyeva, N., Morales, N.E., Huffaker, S.L., Mejorado, T., & Grant, I. (2023). Self-reported adverse events associated with Δ8-Tetrahydrocannabinol (Delta-8-THC) Use. *Journal of Cannabis Research*, 5(15). Doi: 10.1186/s42238-023-00191-y

¹³ Bozman, M.E., Manoharan, S.V.R.R., & Vasavada, T. (2022). Marijuana variant of concern: Delta 8-tetrahydrocannabinol (Delta-8-THC, Δ8-THC). *Psychiatry Research Case Reports*, 1(2). Doi: 10.1016/j.psycr.2022.100028.

¹⁴ Miller, C.R., Burk, B.G., Fargason, R.E., & Birur, B. (2023). Delta-8-THC association with psychosis: A case report with literature review. *Front Psychiatry*. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2023.1103123

CADCA
California Consortium of Addiction Programs & Professionals
Cannabis Impact Prevention Coalition, LLC
Cannabis Industry Victims Educating Litigators (CIVEL)
Cannabis Industry Victims Seeking Justice (CIVSJ)
Charting Careers, Inc.
College on Problems of Drug Dependence
Consumer Federation of America (CFA)
D.A.R.E. America
DEA Educational Foundation
Drug Enforcement Association of Federal Narcotics Agents (DEAFNA)
Drug Free America Foundation, Inc.
Every Brain Matters
Foundation for a Healthy Generation
Georgians for a Responsible Marijuana Policy
Institute for Behavioral Health, Inc.
International Academy on the Science & Impact of Cannabis
Lost Voices of Fentanyl
Maryland Prevention Works Coalition
MATFORCE
Minnesota Prevention Alliance
Monument Prevention Coalition
Mothers Against Prescription Drug Abuse (MAPDA)
National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA)
National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies (NASDEA)
National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers
National HIDTA Director's Association (NHDA)
National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition (NNOAC)
National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives
New Jerseyans Against Legalizing Marijuana
No2Pot
North Carolinians Against Legalizing Marijuana
One Chance to Grow Up
Partnership to End Addiction
Pennsylvania Against Legalizing Marijuana
Prevention Alliance of Tennessee
Public Health Institute (PHI)
Save Our Society from Drugs
Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM)
Student Assistance Services Corporation
Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)
Substance Awareness Coalition Leaders of Arizona (SACLaz)
Texans for Safe and Drug-Free Youth
Treatment Communities of America
Washington State Public Health Association
WestCare Foundation

Cc: Democratic Leader Schumer, Republican Leader McConnell, Senator Heinrich, Senator Hoeven, Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Scalise, Democratic Leader Jeffries, Representative Burgess, Representative McGovern, Representative Harris, and Representative Bishop