Dear members of the Commerce Committee,

I am writing to submit my written testimony in favor of HF 100, the bill to legalize recreational cannabis in Minnesota. As someone who has personally experienced the benefits of cannabis use, I strongly believe that it should be made more easily accessible to all individuals who could benefit from it.

I have suffered from chronic pain since sustaining a traumatic spinal cord injury in high school. Cannabis has been a lifesaver for me, easing my physical pain and emotional depression without rendering me incapacitated as the opioids did. However, I believe that access to marijuana should not be a privilege only available to those who can afford it.

The legalization and regulation of recreational cannabis under HF 100 would provide safer access for all, while also creating jobs and generating tax revenue for the state. Furthermore, it would help to reduce the burden on the criminal justice system. Having a regulated supply of marijuana also ensures that people are getting a safe product, rather than having to rely on street drugs that can be of unknown quality and purity, and may contain harmful contaminants.

Marijuana as a recreational drug is far safer than many other legal substances such as alcohol and tobacco, it does not pose any greater risk to public health and safety. Additionally, marginalized communities such as BIPOC and low-income residents would benefit greatly from the economic benefits of the cannabis industry. Furthermore, legacy growers and distributors should have priority over business licenses, and non-violent cannabis-related crimes and criminal records should be expunged.

I urge you to please consider the real-world benefits and support this bill.

Thank you for your time, Sophie