



March 24, 2026

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Christopher Brown, Executive Director of CARE for Georgia, and I appreciate the work this committee is doing as Georgia navigates the evolving landscape of hemp, cannabinoids, and medical cannabis policy.

Yesterday Georgia expanded medical cannabis through SB 220. Today, as we consider SB 33, we have an opportunity to make sure our cannabinoid policies work together to protect consumers while still supporting research and innovation.

Cannabinoid research, innovation, and regulation

Georgia should regulate intoxicating products, but we should not shut down cannabinoid research and innovation while the science is still evolving. SB 33 is trying to address intoxicating hemp products, which is understandable. But as Georgia expands medical cannabis through SB 220, we should also allow research and innovation around cannabinoids so the state can lead in medical science rather than fall behind.

Georgia just expanded medical cannabis with SB 220. As we discuss SB 33 today, we should make sure cannabinoid policy supports research, patient safety, and responsible regulation rather than eliminating an entire sector overnight.

Regulate intoxicating products if necessary, but leave room for research, innovation, and patient access. Georgia has an opportunity right now to build a complete cannabinoid policy framework. SB 220 expands medical access, SB 33 addresses consumer safety, and the next step is supporting research and innovation so the state stays ahead of the science.

The conversation is around:

- patient education
- public health
- policy modernization
- community reinvestment

We offer the following friendly amendments and conversation:

1. Add a research exemption clause.

The term ‘intoxicating cannabinoids’ shall not apply to cannabinoids possessed or produced for approved medical or agricultural research conducted in partnership with a state university, medical institution, or the Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission.

2. Testing / Certificate of Analysis Section | Public Health and Universities

The Department of Agriculture may authorize cannabinoid research programs for the purpose of studying safety, dosage, and therapeutic potential in partnership with Georgia research institutions.

3. Regulatory Authority Section (Department of Agriculture) | Agricultural Innovation

The Department may establish a pilot program to study emerging cannabinoids and their potential medical or agricultural applications.

4. Implementation / Effective Date

Businesses producing or selling hemp-derived products shall be granted a transition period of at least 12 months to comply with new regulatory standards.

Please note that not every cannabinoid is considered intoxicating.

Non-intoxicating Cannabinoids:

- CBD
- CBG
- CBC
- CBN (mild)
- many minor cannabinoids

Georgia should study cannabinoids like THCA through controlled research programs.

- Morehouse School of Medicine
- Emory University
- University of Georgia
- Georgia Access to Medical Cannabis Commission

These partnerships could support:

- clinical cannabinoid research
- dosing studies
- neurological treatment trials
- agricultural innovation

THCA Is the Grey Area

This creates the legal question legislators are struggling with:

Is THCA intoxicating or not?

Many regulators treat it as “potential THC.” But scientifically:

- THCA itself does not cause intoxication
- It has anti-inflammatory and neuroprotective research potential

Cannabinoids are still being studied around the world. Georgia has the opportunity to regulate intoxicating products responsibly while also supporting research into cannabinoids like THCA that may have medical potential.

Georgia Cannabinoid Research Initiative

A program that could:

- study cannabinoids like THCA, CBD, and minor cannabinoids
- support patient safety and dosing research
- help Georgia farmers participate in cannabinoid innovation
- develop pharmaceutical partnerships

Georgia has already built a regulated medical cannabis system. The next step is leveraging that system to support research and innovation so our universities and farmers can lead in cannabinoid science.

My comments today are offered in the spirit of collaboration and policy modernization, and I hope to offer a few ideas that can help Georgia protect the public while also supporting research and innovation for the future.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Christopher Brown
Executive Director