

Arleigh Kraus
Warren
LD 355

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Arleigh Kraus. I am a registered cannabis caregiver with a B.S. in biochemistry, an organic farmer, and business owner in Warren. I am a founding member of the Maine Craft Cannabis Association, a member of Seed2Health Learning Health Alliance, a board member of Medical Marijuana Caregivers of Maine, the Chair of the Adult and Medical Cannabis Committee for the Town of Warren, I am on the State of Maine Cannabis Advisory Commission as a caregiver representative, and I am a founding member of the Cannabis Council of Maine. I have been a caregiver in Maine for over 10 years.

I am here today in support of LD 355. As an appointed member of the cannabis advisory committee I was happy to have been chosen to be a representative of the medical cannabis community as a registered caregiver of the program. The advisory committee at the time of my appointment was composed mainly of individuals who were members of large cannabis companies, addiction specialists, public health professionals and law enforcement. My appointment put me in the minority of representatives. I was one of only a few people who had any involvement with cultivation and medical cannabis patient care. The advisory committee has not met once since I was appointed last year. Because the committee can only meet when the legislature is not in session any productive conversations which may arise from this committee is limited.

I am supportive of the eradication of the advisory committee due to the lack of Maine cannabis industry and patient representatives and any significant value arising from previous committee meetings. That being said, a reshaping of the advisory committee would also be welcomed. If the committee were to be able to meet while in session and be composed of representatives from the medical cannabis community working here in Maine as well as cannabis patients this would make more sense as a resource to the VLA committee and add real value. Ideally the advisory committee should contain medical caregivers, patients, medical providers, medical cannabis cultivators, cannabis laboratory scientists, and agricultural experts. The people of this agricultural community should be able to represent their industry without the need to defend their very existence.

Thank you for your consideration.