

Andelena Henderson  
West Paris Provisions  
LD 365

Senator Craig Hickman, House Chair Laura Supica and other distinguished members of the committee of Veteran and Legal Affairs. I am speaking today in support of LD365 but with requests of some edits before it reaches its final form.

My name is Andelena Henderson, I am a Navy Veteran, and used to teach classes for the state, I also serve my community on the West Paris town board, and am the caregiver at West Paris Provisions Medical Dispensary, and this bill is personal to me.

Last Year, I was almost homeless over a \$5 1 gram preroll. My employees, whom at the time were all female and most with their own families and kids, temporarily lost their jobs and had to be put on welfare, all over a 5 dollar preroll. This not only cost me a bunch of money, it cost the state a bunch of money for all of my employees to loose their jobs, collect unemployment, be put on welfare, and all over a \$5 preroll!

My attorney who is an ex state trooper said, "they gave you the death penalty for Jay-walking" and the punishment came unexpectedly 9 months after the incident and after following up with OCP multiple times, with each time being told I was in complete compliance and in good standing!

Here is what happened: I had a an employee, whom no longer works for us, break the law. She was on register, it was busy and an older man came in, knew her by name and had the exact amount of change including tax for exactly one \$5 1 gram preroll. He new our establishment, new exactly what he wanted, acted like regular and acted as if he was in a major rush, she messed up, and we acknowledge that a mistake was made, and the mistake was she didn't check his ID let him put the money on the counter and take the preroll. We know this was wrong. It turns out this was a sting. The older man was an undercover police officer.

I do not disagree that we messed up, got caught, and should have had a fine or something that "fit the crime" of a preroll being given to a person clearly way older then 21 but without a med card. However, the punishment for this infraction was wrong too. I wasn't there when it happened, the employee got a minor slap on the wrist and a new job at different dispensary. I went through a process to correct this situation. We completed the list of requirements needed to be in complete compliance.

Further, when we had our inspection, ours lasted almost 4 hours! On average most inspections last about 45 minutes. During this inspection, One of the corrections they had me fix was a graphic on a venders preroll. I had to cover up the blueberry graphic on preroll label sticker from a vendor we we were selling for. The same inspectors inspected the vendor who had around 2500 stickers left, they told him that it was ok to use up his stickers but once they were gone to change it. Same inspectors. Same stickers, Different punishment. Why? Because, it is up to the inspectors interpretation, and without guidelines they can pick and choose who gets punished and who doesn't and the severity of the punishment.

Another thing was I needed was a tobacco license. The inspector laughed at me and told me - good luck getting one, no one gets them. It took me about 4 months, 20 plus phone calls, and 4 certified letters, however, I finally got it. So, I called the inspector and was told I was 100% compliant and in good standing with the state.

That being said, I kept hearing rumors, so I called the state multiple times just to make sure I was in good standing and did everything I needed to to correct the inspectors findings, Each time I was told I was in good standing.

Then 9 months later, out of the blue, my caregivers license was taken away from me over the \$5 preroll incident. My livelihood was taken away from me, my husband whom I met in my 40s was battling stage 4 throat cancer and had no job because we weren't even sure if we would wake up one day and her would still be here with us just lost his financial security for healthcare and treatments because my livelihood

was taken from me. My two homes where I have my grows were in my name that I had before meeting my husband, they said I needed to leave my homes for 6 months as I couldn't be around cannabis, so I asked them do you expect me live out of my van for the 6 months? This was only one of several the discussed punishments before we the plea deal we finally settled on.

What upsets me the most is OCP and inspectors can pick and choose who gets the punishment and who doesn't. It is up to the discretion and interpretation of the inspector. The state claimed they gave me a warning, but my attorney and I were able to prove that had never happened. At one point in time, when I built my fence they approved every bit of my material I had, when it got inspected I was told they only pass chain linked not wood, it was not in the rules or regs at the time, but the cherry on top was the same inspector passed some of my friends fences whose were identically built to mine! The same inspector. The same materials. Just different growers. This is why this bill is important! THERE NEEDS TO BE GUIDELINES in place. We need punishments that fit the crime. We need set rules to follow that are not open to interpretation so inspectors and OCP can't pick and choose whose compliant and whose not even in identical situations.

Why I'm not in full support of this bill yet in its current written form is the chance that OCP will be the ones in charge of this decision. With their track record with my personal experience and with my friends who are in this industry, OCP should NOT be given more power to pick and choose who, what, or when. More details and guidelines need to be added to this bill before it is ready in my opinion, and it should NOT be up to OCP.

I think this bill is a great idea, however, I would like to make sure it is written in a fair way for all caregivers, because no one should have to have gone through what my family went through, what my employees went through. OCP took the food out of our children's mouths over a 5 dollar preroll long after the fact the mistake took place and after being assured over and over that I completed everything they asked me to do and was in 100% compliance.

I ask you, does taking away the livelihood of an entire company over a single preroll seem like a fitting punishment? If you ask me, a monetary fine would have been more appropriate, the state would have even benefited from that more than what it cost them for my employees and I to lose our livelihoods. I would have gladly paid out a fine of even 50K, and kept my store functioning and my ladies employed and their families taken care of. I would have gladly taken a mandatory refresher class on rules and regulations, and in fact I think classes should be mandatory for all of us anyway regardless of if we've made a human error. With that not this is the thought I would like to leave you with; We are all human. Treat us as such and give us grace when you do set up the guidelines that are clearly needed to ensure fair treatment for all caregivers.

Thank You for your time,  
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