



**Testimony of Maine Public Health Association in Opposition to:
LD 355: An Act To Eliminate the Cannabis Advisory Commission**

Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
State House, Room 437
Monday, February 13, 2023

Good morning, Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. My name is Rebecca Boulos. I am a resident of South Portland and executive director of Maine Public Health Association.

MPHA is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent more than 700 individual members and 60 organizations across the state. The mission of MPHA is to improve and sustain the health and well-being of all people in Maine through health promotion, disease prevention, and the advancement of health equity. As a statewide nonprofit association, we advocate, act, and advise on critical public health challenges, aiming to improve the policies, systems, and environments that underlie health inequities – but which also have potential to improve health outcomes for all people in Maine. We are not tied to a national agenda, which means we are responsive to the needs of Maine's communities, and we take that responsibility seriously.

MPHA is opposed to LD 355: "An Act To Eliminate the Cannabis Advisory Commission." This bill repeals the Cannabis Advisory Commission.

The Cannabis Advisory Commission is essential for a thoughtful and planful approach to cannabis policy in Maine. The [purposes of the Commission](#) are to "review laws and rules pertaining to the adult use cannabis and medical cannabis industries in this State and any other provision of law or rule pertaining to cannabis, including, but not limited to, laws and rules regarding public health, public safety, juvenile and adult criminal and civil offenses, workplace drug testing, workplace safety, motor vehicle safety, landlords and tenants, the personal use of cannabis and taxes and fees paid to the State by applicants and registered caregivers and registered dispensaries under the Maine Medical Use of Cannabis Act and applicants and licensees under this Act." The Cannabis Advisory Commission has a [diverse membership](#), all of whom have different perspectives on cannabis policies in Maine. The Commission is a legislatively required connection to public health and safety, with commissioner appointments by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and Public Safety, and a public health policy expert. The Commission includes membership from the tribal community, civil liberties, and agriculture among other appointments.

We respectfully request the Committee to please consider learning more about the challenges with regular convenings of the Commission and its work to date, and identifying strategies for resolving those, instead of repealing it altogether. It is not often these diverse perspectives are brought together to discuss regulations; repealing this Commission would be a significant loss for education and well-informed policymaking.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

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