



March 8, 2023

Re: LD 541 An Act to Create Parity in the Taxation of Medicine

Position: Support

Dear Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and the esteemed members of the Maine Taxation Committee,

My name is Ben Edwards. I am the owner of the Schoppee Farm in Downeast Maine. We cultivate, harvest, and process hemp, and we produce low THC cannabis products - what most would call "CBD products". We also collaborate with many medical caregivers to help formulate custom medicine for their patients. I am very appreciative of the efforts of Representative Fredricks, and others, to bring this common sense bill forward before the taxation committee.

I have seen time and again the medicinal benefits of cannabis. Thousands of times in fact in the last 4+ years. A number surprising even to me when I looked it up this evening. The very fact that we work with so many small caregivers to custom tailor medications to individual patients, and that patients will travel great distances to purchase them, is profound evidence of not only the efficacy of the medicine but the dedication of the caregivers involved.

I am very proud of Maine's long history of putting the wellbeing of its citizens first, and of supporting small Maine businesses. This bill does both. For the most part medical cannabis is crafted by small owner operated businesses that are the lifeblood of Maine's economy. Because of marijuana's federal illegality these business face a myriad of burdensome challenges. Most patients that we work with suffer from highly refractory conditions not handled adequately by mainstream care and often because of their conditions face significant financial hardship which often prevents them from affording the medicines they need. This puts the small businesses in the position of having to subsidize the medicines themselves so their patients can have the medicines they need. Every single caregiver that we work with gives away product in this way, because it is simply needed and they are not willing to not provide it because of an inability to pay. While removing the 5.5% sales tax may seem like a small gesture, I can assure you it is not. It will inject a little more money into Maine small businesses and put a little more needed medicine in patients hands. Please continue to put the health of Maine's citizens and the health of Maine's small business first and pass LD 541.

Sincerely,

Benjamin C. Edwards