

arleigh kraus
warren
LD 541

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee of Taxation. 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, 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 541 An Act to Create Parity in the Taxation of Medicine. This is a bill which will remove the mandate of 5.5% sales tax on medical cannabis and reduce the economic strain for patients purchasing this medicine.

Medical cannabis should not be taxed. It is a medication. Just as prescription medications from antibiotics to pain medications are exempt from this tax, medical cannabis users should also be excused from taxation.

Patients I provide for use medical cannabis for a wide range of medical issues. For instance some conditions I have seen patients for are arthritis, migraine headaches, post surgical pain, dental pain, insomnia, treatment resistant anxiety, neuropathies, glaucoma, irritable bowel syndrome and Crohn's disease, cancer, ankylosing spondylosis, shingles and lyme disease. These are verified medical conditions with which cannabis has been life changing for real human beings living not only here in Maine but also traveling to Maine for our exceptional medical cannabis. Individuals on fixed incomes purchasing medicines have severely limited funds for alternative therapeutics. Not only are patients having to pay out of pocket for medical cannabis but they are also taxed on their purchase. Patients should have the option of which therapeutics they choose to use without additional taxation for not choosing a pharmaceutical which may have unwanted side effects. A patient who requires \$200 worth of cannabis medicine per week has a yearly taxation amount of roughly \$600 at a sales tax rate of 5.5%. This is money that should not be taken by the state, it is money which should stay in the hands of patients who need it most.

Why should there be a tax on a product which is categorized in statute as a medical program. How can the state have it both ways? There should be taxation parity with medical cannabis following suit with non cannabis medicines.

Currently there are 8 states which exempt medical cannabis from taxation.

Thank you for your consideration.