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Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee
2 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
BY ONLINE FILE SUBMISSION

March 29, 2023

**RE: LD 94 - An Act Regarding the Use of Medical Cannabis by Minors
Ought Not to Pass**

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen and an attorney for Maine patients and caregivers to urge you to reject LD 94, "An Act Regarding the Use of Medical Cannabis by Minors". This bill, as currently written, would severely undermine the rights and well-being of thousands of Maine patients who rely on medical cannabis for their health and quality of life and largely roll back over a decade of progress in building one of the nation's strongest medical cannabis programs.

As you may know, LD 94's original summary provided that it was intended "to require approval from a minor's primary care provider before that minor may use medical cannabis." However, the latest version of the bill has gone far beyond its original scope and would effectively gut Maine's medical cannabis program if passed.

Specifically, LD 94 would:

- Outlaw cannabis concentrates in the medical program, which are essential for many patients who need high doses of cannabinoids to treat severe pain, seizures, cancer, PTSD, and other conditions. Concentrates may also be safer and more convenient than smoking or vaping raw cannabis flower, and some patients cannot tolerate inhaled treatments.
- Jeopardize patient privacy and delay treatment by placing the government in charge of issuing certification cards and therefore provide it with a list of all medical cannabis patients. This would lead to increased paperwork and delay for patients who need relief, as well as undermine doctor-patient confidentiality. As with prescriptions, a patient's medical cannabis certification should stay between a doctor and patient.
- Remove a medical provider's autonomy and bring back a limited list of conditions that qualify for certification. This would prevent patients from accessing medical cannabis for a wide range of conditions that can benefit from its use, such as insomnia, generalized

anxiety, end-of-life symptoms, rare neurological disorders, and many more. Medical providers are trained and licensed to evaluate each patient's individual needs and risks and should be trusted to make informed decisions about the best course of treatment for their patients.

- Prohibit physician assistants from providing certifications. This would limit the availability and accessibility of medical cannabis for many patients who rely on physician assistants as their primary care providers or specialists. As you know, it can be difficult to find or schedule an appointment with a physician, as the physician shortage continues to worsen. Physician assistants are qualified and authorized to prescribe medications and treatments for their patients and should be able to do so with medical cannabis as well.

These proposed changes would have devastating consequences for thousands of Maine patients who depend on medical cannabis for their health and well-being. They would force many patients to either break the law and risk legal repercussions for a victimless crime or go without their medicine and suffer from debilitating symptoms and reduced quality of life.

Maine has one of the best medical cannabis programs in the country, thanks to the hard work and advocacy of patients, caregivers, providers, and legislators over the past decade. LD 94 would undo much of that progress and harm Maine patients in very real and tangible ways. I urge you to vote down this bill and protect the rights and health of Maine's medical cannabis patients.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew T. Dubois".

Matthew T. Dubois, Esq.

Cc: Douglas Amato
James Linsey

MTD/mrp