

LD 2147- An Act to Remove the Requirement for Edible Cannabis Products to Be Stamped or Embossed on Each Serving with a Universal Symbol

My name is Amy Mayhew, MD and I am a child and adolescent psychiatrist in the state of Maine who works primarily with young people that are at risk of developing or have developed psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia. I am here to speak against LD 2147 and HP 1371.

I apologize that I am not able to be in person today, but I feel strongly about the message we are sending our young people with this bill and wanted to submit testimony. For those of you that are unaware, psychosis is when someone has difficulty distinguishing between fantasy and reality, a very real risk to young people that ingest any cannabis product. Removing a universal symbol from these edible cannabis products seems to me an attempt to deidentify these items to make them seem like any other substance one may eat safely. To some, a gummy with THC or cannabis-infused cookie may be a safe choice, but I see the young people who ingest these products and have a bad reaction, 1358 of whom visited an emergency department in my hospital system this year. I see the college freshman who had one cannabis-infused brownie and developed schizophrenia. I know the young man who started with cannabis, developed schizophrenia, and then killed himself last year by lighting himself on fire. In 2017, the National Academy of Medicine reviewed 30 years of research and concluded: "...the association between cannabis use and development of a psychotic disorder is supported by data synthesized in several good-quality reviews. The magnitude of this association is moderate to large and appears to be dose dependent," meaning, the more you ingest, the higher the risk. People between the ages of 16 and 25 years of age are most at risk of developing psychotic symptoms and later a psychotic illness from cannabis. Eating a cannabis-infused gummy that your grandmother bought to help her sleep is not the same as eating a gummy I bought at the grocery store, especially if I am under the age of 25 years old. By removing a universal symbol that identifies these products, we would be communicating these products are safe for everyone and do not need to be treated differently. If adults, preferably over the age of 25, want to ingest these products, that it is one thing, but to communicate that there is no risk to using these psychoactive substances, I have a whole panel of patients that would tell you otherwise. Thank you.