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LD 40

I am in support of LD 40 as an employee in the industry. LD 40 will alleviate the financial burden placed on everyday workers in the industry stemming from repeated fees associated with renewing their IIC, which totals \$100 per year. The most redundant aspect of this process is having to be fingerprinted every year, when that data is saved with the state government after going through the process once. Requiring normal employees to repeatedly submit this information for no real purpose only serves to perpetuate the stigma that those who work in cannabis are criminals, in addition to creating distrust toward the state within the industry.

Furthermore, the inefficient and burdensome licensing process through OCP would be reformed, potentially giving months back to small businesses who could be using that time to grow and operate. This would also benefit the Office, which continually mentions understaffing, by cutting down on the amount of redundant work its employees have to undertake.

LD 40 would also remove the restrictions around cannabis marketing and package design, allowing for more creativity and giving small businesses a boon within this crowded market. When tobacco and alcohol brands are not held to regulations around what can be on their packaging, cannabis should be treated similarly. If the concern is child welfare, I would direct you to any number of alcoholic beverages marketed specifically toward the youth populace (Not Your Father's Root Beer, for example).

Overall, LD 40 would remove the undue strain placed on small businesses within the cannabis industry. We are no different than those who work in breweries or distilleries. The financial burden of exorbitant excise taxes, repeated lab testing, and the redundant licensing process are not shared in the same way by other industries. Cannabis is one of Maine's largest agricultural industries and deserves to be treated as the economic success it is.