

Kelly Otis
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LD 40

Dear Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Honorable Members of the VLA Committee, My name is Kelly Otis and I live in Rumford. I am the manager of an adult use retail location in western Maine. I am urging the Committee to please vote ought to pass on LD 40. The cannabis industry has been dealing with the stigma forever. I come from the food and bev industry, and I can tell you first hand that we are treated so much differently in the cannabis industry. The State regulated us like we're selling plutonium, but at the end of the day it's just a plant that people have been using since the dawn of history. I can't tell you how awkward it is to tell mothers they can't come into the store because they have their baby with them. It's absurd. They can bring their child into liquor stores, pharmacies, and even medical stores. I have to get fingerprinted every year. My fingerprints have not changed. It is a ridiculous practice, and it makes me feel like a criminal every year. I can tell you that I've never once had to pass a FBI background check to sell drinks. My boss tells me I can't move any furniture or displays without him submitting a new operating plan to OCP. This hinders my ability to merchandise our products and hurts our business. Why does OCP need to be notified every time we move a display case? I've read the statute, and it just doesn't feel right. At the end of the day, all of these rules feel like the State is treating us like criminals. It's unfair, and it needs to be righted. I know a lot of this is left over from prohibition, but Maine is legal. We need our laws to start reflecting that, instead of having one foot still stuck in the era of prohibition. We don't want special treatment. We just want to be treated like every other industry. Please pass LD 40 and get the stigma out of the statute. Thank you.