

Jacob Michaud
North Monmouth
LD 40

Subject: Testimony in Support of LD 40 - Addressing Cannabis Stigma and Promoting Equity

Dear Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

My name is Jake Michaud, and I'm the owner of Vert Cannabis.

It's time to face the music – disqualifying individuals based on past drug offenses in the cannabis industry is like holding onto an outdated playlist. We've seen other industries, like food and retail, ditch this tune, recognizing that people can change and deserve a fair shot. This policy not only misses the beat of progress but also perpetuates a discordant note of discrimination. We're all about rewriting the songbook, and it starts by erasing this outdated track from the cannabis industry. Let's embrace a more harmonious and inclusive approach that allows individuals to contribute their unique melodies without being weighed down by the echoes of the past.

Imposing a \$100,000 fine on cannabis businesses constitutes an undue burden, particularly for smaller enterprises within the industry. This punitive financial penalty seems disproportionately high when juxtaposed with comparable fines in the alcohol sector. To ensure equity and a proportional approach, a revision of the fine structure is imperative. Such a recalibration would not only foster fairness but also alleviate the financial pressure on emerging businesses, enabling them to operate within a regulatory framework without the specter of excessively punitive fines looming overhead. Adjusting the fine structure is a prudent step toward cultivating a business environment that is conducive to growth and development.

Let's talk seeds and seedlings, the real MVPs of the cannabis world. These little guys are like the creative sparks that keep the industry buzzing. Now, imagine if we let them roam free, bringing in fresh genetics, creating a vibrant market full of variety. However, current regulations prevent this, even though they are federally legal. LD 40 fixes this, giving a high-five to innovation and growth. Let's ditch the red tape and let these seeds do what they do best – sprout diversity and make our cannabis scene flourish and flower.

Granting cannabis operators the ability to produce hemp-derived products represents a logical step towards fostering a more inclusive and versatile industry. Hemp-derived products, federally legal and distinct from traditional cannabis items, open avenues for diversification and innovation. Allowing cannabis operators to venture into this domain not only aligns with federal regulations but also reflects an acknowledgment of the varied applications and potential benefits associated with hemp. This approach harmonizes with the evolving landscape of the cannabis industry, promoting economic growth, product diversity, and contributing to the normalization of cannabis-related businesses within the broader market.

Please pass LD 40 and give us the equal treatment our industry deserves.

Sincerely, Jacob Michaud