

**Jamie Comstock testimony**  
**Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee**  
**In opposition to LD 40**  
**March 6, 2024**

Good morning, Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. My name is Jamie Comstock and I am submitting this testimony against [LD 40](#), An Act to Amend Cannabis Laws or, as amended six days before this public hearing, An Act To Protect Liberty and Advance Justice in the Implementation, Administration and Enforcement of the Cannabis Legalization Act and To Implement Certain Recommendations of the Subcommittee on Non-substantive Changes to the Maine Medical Use of Cannabis Act. I am submitting my testimony as a prevention professional and not on behalf of an organization.

I have worked in substance use prevention in Maine for 17 years and have closely watched as Maine and other states across the country have rolled out medical and retail cannabis markets.

I believe in a safe, well-regulated cannabis industry that allows for **thoughtful discourse** and prioritizes the public health and safety of all Mainers, not just those who use cannabis. My prevention colleagues and I appreciate the opportunities we've had over the years to provide an often overlooked prevention perspective to the members of your committee, and to work in good faith with the cannabis industry to ensure public health and safety.

I am disappointed in the rollout of LD 40, which is a sweeping overhaul of the Maine Medical Use of Cannabis Act, includes significant changes to the Cannabis Legalization Act, and changes the purpose of the Office of Cannabis Policy, among many other things. Its breadth is broad and deep (yet it's classified as containing "non-substantive changes"), and its late-session timing prevents thorough analysis and **thoughtful discourse** about the 119 sections of proposed changes - each of which merits its own, separate legislation and bill hearing. It's a bait and switch with far reaching impacts for Maine's youth, public health and safety, cannabis users and non-users alike.

Because I do not have time to address all 66 pages of the amended language, I have chosen to highlight a few problems from the bill. However, these are just some of many and this entire bill needs to be voted ought not to pass.

LD 40 amends the labeling and packaging requirements. These are some of the most important tools we have to 1) reduce the appeal of these products to youth to minimize youth use and 2) prevent accidental ingestion of cannabis products by youth.

LD 40 also adds a brand new section that puts civil penalties on minors to “hold youth accountable,” but we know that the imposition of penalties, such as fines, on youth can have long-term damaging impacts for youth, their families, and actually result in higher recidivism rates. For these reasons many states across the country are now moving away from the very types of penalties this bill seeks to impose.

Please vote ought not to pass on this entire bill. If there are changes that need to be made, then they should be brought up individually or in similar categories next session, with enough advance notice that all interested parties have enough time to digest, analyze and communicate their perspectives, resulting in a better quality cannabis program for **all** Mainers.

Thank you for your time,

Jamie Comstock  
1 Brook Street  
Orono, Maine