

LD 2218

An Act to Remove the Age-related Statutory Prerequisite for Sealing Criminal History Record Information

LD 2236

An Act to Expand the List of Crimes Eligible for a Post-judgment Motion to Seal Criminal History Record Information to Include Convictions for Possession and Cultivation of Marijuana

LD 2269

An Act to Automatically Seal Criminal History Record Information for Class D and Class E Crimes Relating to Marijuana Possession and Cultivation

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Maine Committee on Judiciary, My name is Abigail Beal of Cherryfield, Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I am writing in opposition to LD's 2218, 2236, and 2269. It appears these bills attempt to retroactively expunge the criminal records of those who committed illegal actions relating to marijuana in the past.

Whether or not we consider these actions to be crimes now, those who committed the actions at the time **did** break the laws of the time and were not conducting themselves as upright, law-abiding citizens. Why cover for criminal behavior? It's not as though these folks were hiding slaves against the law to protect lives or had a moral obligation to participate in illegal marijuana. Marijuana is a harmful drug\* that is still illegal according to federal law.

We are witnessing first-hand the increasing destructive effects of our population's fascination with marijuana as more and more pot shops and facilities spread like wild-fire through our cities and towns.

There are multitudinous ongoing issues surrounding marijuana operations here in the state of Maine (for more info, visit the "Triad Weed" series at [www.themainewire.com](http://www.themainewire.com)). Instead of encouraging the continued expansion, protection, and use of such drugs in our society, I respectfully suggest it would be prudent to seriously re-consider previous moves taken by the state to protect this drug, and by so doing, encourage rather a safe society that is not dependent upon drugs and vices.

Please oppose these bills. Thank you.

\* *Published in The New York Times:*

# Marijuana Has Proven to Be a Gateway Drug

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It should come as no surprise that the vast majority of heroin users have used marijuana (and many other drugs) not only long before they used heroin but while they are using heroin. Like nearly all people with substance abuse problems, most heroin users initiated their drug use early [in their teens](#), usually beginning with alcohol and marijuana. There is ample evidence that early initiation of drug use [primes the brain](#) for enhanced later responses to other drugs. These facts underscore the need for effective prevention to reduce adolescent use of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana in order to turn back the heroin and opioid epidemic and to reduce burdens addiction in this country.

Marijuana use is positively correlated with alcohol use and cigarette use, as well as illegal drugs like cocaine and methamphetamine. This does not mean that everyone who uses marijuana will transition to using heroin or other drugs, but it does mean that people who use marijuana also [consume more, not less, legal and illegal drugs](#) than do people who do not use marijuana.

People who are addicted to marijuana are [three times more likely](#) to be addicted to heroin.

The legalization of marijuana increases availability of the drug and acceptability of its use. This is bad for public health and safety not only because marijuana use increases the risk of heroin use.

A better drug policy is one that actively discourages marijuana use as well as other recreational drug use, especially for youth. The aggressive commercialization of marijuana that is now rampant and still growing is particularly damaging to the public health because it markets marijuana and an array of increasingly potent products in ever more attractive ways that encourage marijuana use and frequent high-dose THC use.

We are at a crossroads. Legalizing marijuana will have lasting negative effects on future generations. The currently legal drugs, alcohol and tobacco, are two of the leading causes of preventable illness and death in the country. Establishing marijuana as a third legal drug will increase the national drug abuse problem, including expanding the opioid epidemic.

*Establishing it as a third legal drug, along with tobacco and alcohol, will increase drug abuse, including the expanding opioid epidemic.*