



## **MAINE COUNSELING ASSOCIATION**

*A State Branch of the American Counseling Association*

March 19, 2024

### Testimony in Opposition to LD 40

#### “An Act to Amend the Cannabis Laws”

(also referred to as “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”)

Senator Craig Hickman, Representative Laura Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

My name is Stan Pelletier, I am a certified School (guidance) Counselor and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC), and have worked in Maine Schools and communities for over 25 years. I am also the Public Policy Chair for the Maine Counseling Association (MeCA), a state branch of the American Counseling Association (ACA), an organization representing professional counselors including school counselors and licensed mental health counselors. It is in this capacity that I express the concerned opposition of the MeCA Executive Board for LD 40, An Act to Amend the Cannabis Laws.

We feel that the emergency consideration being given to a lengthy amendment of supposedly “non-substantive” changes is creating an unwarranted and unproductive sense of urgency. What is at stake is potentially lessening protections around the acquisition and use of a psychoactive drug, and this is a process we should not consider hastily. We do not support provisions contained in this proposed legislation that water down safeguards meant to prevent cannabis advertising designed to appeal to youth. Nor do we support the notion that we can enforce or punish our way out of drug problems by increasing civil penalties for minors in violation of cannabis use or possession laws. And we are not in favor of

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provisions that lower the bar for cannabis access, such as allowing youth ages 17+ to work in cannabis facilities.

We appreciate the efforts of the members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs to proceed thoughtfully with the regulation of the cannabis industry, in a way which protects the healthy development of Maine youth, the safety of the public, and appropriate access to cannabis for the citizens of Maine. Thank you for your time and attention, and for the opportunity to share our views with the membership of the Legislative Committee.

Best regards,

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