

Duncan Markovich
Better Ways LLC - Branford, CT
LD 584

To Chairs Senator Hickman and Representative Supica, and all esteemed members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee,

I appreciate this opportunity today to share with you my support for LD 584.

My name is Duncan Markovich, owner and founder of Better Ways, a cannabis therapeutics, education, and community center in my hometown of Branford, CT.

I use cannabis daily for pain management and nerve damage after a surgical complication resulting from my 4th open heart surgery in 2010.

My grandfather flew for the Navy as a Hurricane Hunter and I have the greatest respect for those that assist our veterans with accessing the quality cannabis they deserve, so thank you truly for what this committee does and stands for.

Today I wanted to aid my colleague and fellow cannabis activist Derek Shirley with echoing the need for fair and objective appointments of any official, government or not, when it comes to the oversight affairs of anything cannabis related.

As this plant and its attached industry continues to expand in concept and practice, we must ensure overall integrity and transparency by collaborative design – without those bearings and guardrails, the plant and ultimately those that rely on it are put in harm's way.

In this case harm has occurred in the form of significant broken trust, both at the state level and within our cannabis community in Maine and here in New England.

I feel this bill will strengthen the needed transparency when appointing such regulatory officials and begin repairing faith and trust in the Office of Cannabis Policy. More importantly I feel that this bill provides a beacon towards the telos of improvement and integrity for our region to take note of.

I also feel it prudent to take this moment and remind those currently overseeing regulation and enforcement around cannabis that it is a great privilege to work alongside this plant and our community. As an industry, we are a highly self-regulating network of healers, professionals, farmers, activists and patients which is why having these conversations with our elected officials is tantamount when designing ethical and equitable cannabis laws.

When there is a potential danger to the sanctity of this balance within our community, whether it be by an individual, brand, operator, regulator or legislator...we are unflinching to raise the appropriate concerns as well as offer equally appropriate solutions and support.

I commend the great state of Maine and this committee for its continued commitment to these tenets – I feel that effort is also well exemplified in your medical cannabis caregiver model. Some of its language has been successfully adopted into our own Connecticut Caregiver Bill – HB 5429 which thankfully has gained much momentum this session, so from one state with its own cannabis conundrum, thank you for giving us a pragmatic framework to create solutions.

It is in this very moment we are sharing right now; this is where democracy lives and breathes when there is a thoughtful discord between community members, patients, activists, and legislators. Please aid us in continued protection and liberty for this great plant and those it serves.

Free the plant, free the people.

I welcome any questions or comments.

Duncan Markovich – Owner and Founder – Better Ways LLC – Branford, CT