

Ms. Kings Floyd
Cape Elizabeth
LD 104

Good morning Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veteran and Legal Affairs.

My name is Kings Floyd and I live in Cape Elizabeth, Maine. I have worked as a disability policy expert in numerous areas. I have worked in government at the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the US Department of Transportation, and in the Biden Administration White House. My current role is as a disability research and policy associate at the Century Foundation, a nonprofit think tank based in Washington DC, where my colleagues include esteemed leaders like previous Maine HHS commissioner Jeanne Lambrew, New York Times writer Stephen Greenhouse, and former deputy secretary of labor Julie Su. My role as a research and policy associate means I get to do research, and have written commentaries on, the intersection of cannabis and disability rights.

I am a 30 year old woman with LAMA 2 merosin deficient muscular dystrophy, and I have used medical cannabis since 2017.

I originally began using medical cannabis in Washington, DC, before moving back to Maine in 2020 due to the pandemic. There is no cure for muscular dystrophy, and symptoms often include pain, muscle tension, weakness, and loss of appetite, to name a few. My muscular dystrophy also lessens the strength of my immune system, leading me to be classified by what is known as immunocompromised.

Immunocompromisation comes as a complication attached to many disabilities, numerous of which are not able to be treated through standard, FDA approved methods due to the underfunded and under researched nature of those diseases. Medical cannabis provides a medical alleviation to some of these disabilities, but can only do so effectively, without causing further harm, by being screened for all of the necessary elements. The fact that adult consumption is better regulated for these substances poses a direct harm on the Mainers with disabilities who use medical cannabis when there is nowhere else to turn to medically.

I'm testifying in favor of LD 1847 and LD 104, which would require testing and tracking in Maine's Medical Cannabis Program and prioritize efforts to reduce youth cannabis use.

Having come from living in DC, and using their medical cannabis program for over three years, I can confidently say as both a user and a researcher that Maine's Medical Cannabis Program lags far behind the national standard on safety and transparency. Out of more than 30 of states with medical cannabis programs, Maine is the only one that does not require testing for contaminants like heavy metals, pesticides, or mold. According to the 2023 Maine Office of Cannabis Policy's report Harmful Contaminants in Maine's Medical Cannabis Program, 42% of medical cannabis tested had at least one contaminant that would have failed testing in the Adult Use Cannabis Program.

This lack of oversight is unfair to the thousands of people who use medical cannabis, including disabled patients and pediatric patients. They deserve to have confidence that the products they're using to manage medical conditions are free from contaminants that could harm their health.

Research shows that using higher potency cannabis can increase the risk of experiencing adverse impacts, including mental illnesses like depression and schizophrenia. That's especially true for adolescents whose brains are still developing. Yet unlike in the Adult Use Cannabis Program, there's no cap on the THC content of edibles in the Medical Cannabis Program, which increases the risk of accidental overconsumption, in terms of potency, and associated side effects. This is critical, especially for parents of children with disabilities like epilepsy who need to know that cannabis can be effectively allocated to treat the medical needs of their

child.

I respectfully request you to vote LD 1847 and LD 104 “Ought to Pass” to help ensure transparency and safety in Maine’s Medical Cannabis Program. It’s long overdue. Thank you.