



**Maine Medical  
Association**



**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION,  
THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION,  
THE MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
AND  
THE MAINE CHAPTER, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS**

**Neither for Nor Against**

**LD 1920 - An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Potentially Intoxicating Hemp Products to a Person Under 21 Years of Age**

Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
Room 214, Cross Building, Augusta, Maine  
Thursday, May 15, 2025

Good Morning, Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. My name is Patty Hymanson. I live in York, am a physician, and a past-Maine State Representative from 2015-2022. I am submitting this testimony neither for nor against LD 1920 - An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Potentially Intoxicating Hemp Products to a Person Under 21 Years of Age, on behalf of the Maine Medical Association, the Maine Osteopathic Association, the Maine Public Health Association, and the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing more than 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State. MPHA is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. MPHA represents more than 850 individuals and 70 organizational members across the state. MPHA's mission is to advance the health of all people and places in Maine. The Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Maine AAP) is a professional organization of 300 pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists dedicated to protecting the health of Maine children and adolescents.

The MMA and MOA's legislative committees have joined to advocate with one voice. We are joined by our partners, MPHA and Maine AAP, on this testimony. We all have determined that it is important to testify on this public health issue.

Last year, this Committee directed the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry to convene a working group on intoxicating hemp products. I appreciated being asked to serve on this working group. Director Lapine sent a letter dated November 1, 2024, to this committee on the recommendations of the working group, which included age gating and a THC content cap.<sup>1</sup>

These intoxicating hemp products are new and unregulated. Some are sold alongside non-infused beverages in convenience store coolers, with no clear delineation between them. This is confusing and dangerous for consumers. Indeed, we heard in the working group that kids mistakenly pull the infused beverages off the shelves, thinking they're regular sodas. Some of these products have deceptive product marketing, mimicking other beverages. There are no age restrictions on purchasing. So, it's easy for people to accidentally purchase and consume them, potentially driving intoxicated, or even to buy them for their kids.

These infused products aren't benign. Exposure to high potency THC products has been shown to harm youth's mental and physical health, including increasing their risk for anxiety, depression, and more serious mental illness. It can also harm their cognitive development, learning, and memory, and increase their risk for developing addiction.

Given these considerations, we appreciate the sponsor's intent to protect young people from these new, unregulated products. To gain our support, a few key points need to be addressed.

First, while we appreciate the inclusion of age gates, this bill does not include any provisions to enforce the restriction. We do not seek to be punitive, but we do seek for the current unregulated market to have some sort of disincentive to stop selling these products to young people.

Second, this bill does not propose any potency limits on the product. I have seen items for sale that have 250mg of hemp-derived THC, 1000mg in a vape cartridge. For reference, 5mg would be a mild high.

As a general principle, we are concerned about the risk these unregulated products pose to the public. As we understand it, the synthetic intoxicating hemp-derived cannabinoids are not tracked, tested or age-restricted. It is the job of the State to ensure that the public is safe. Given these considerations, we ask the committee to issue a moratorium on the sale of these products until stakeholders can determine the appropriate regulatory framework to ensure this product is safe, and works for consumers and responsible business owners. While we know these products are also sold online, in-person sales in physical stores in Maine could be halted while we figure this out. We look forward to being meaningful stakeholders in this work. Thank you.

Patty Hymanson, MD

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<sup>1</sup> <https://legislature.maine.gov/doc/11214>.