



Testimony for Public Hearing, LD 991
Committee on Judiciary
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Mark Barnett
125 Granite St
Auburn, ME 04210

My name is Mark Barnett. I am a resident of Auburn, Maine and own a business in Portland, Maine. I work with the Maine Craft Cannabis Association, a group of independent entrepreneurs and enthusiasts focused on crafting sound cannabis policy and fostering an authentic craft cannabis industry in the state of Maine. I submit testimony before this Committee in strong support of LD 991.

The state of Maine owes this action to its citizens

We as a community voted in 2016 to legalize the possession and use of certain amounts of non-medical marijuana by adults in this state, righteously--not just rightly—so. While many viewed that as a commercial opportunity and a win for personal freedoms, which it surely will be for many Maine residents, what it was first and foremost was a vote for justice. It was a vote for rational conversation about a plant that had for decades been used as a tool of oppression, discrimination, for-profit incarceration, pharmaceutical profiteering, racial injustice, and culture war.

Failing to honor that intent, that absolutely necessity of reflection on our past societal wrongs and injustices, would be a discredit to this state and an insult to the many voters who have time and time again when given the opportunity voted to make marijuana legal for adults. It would be salt in the wounds of the many who were not lucky enough to live in this state in an age of reason and who suffered imprisonment, fines, social stigma, difficulty finding fair-paying work, difficulty obtaining loans—the list goes on.

As our elected representatives, the members of this Committee owe those who have paid the price for the insane 'war on drugs'. Spurred on at first by naked racism in the early part of the 20th century and later even more enthusiastically by pharmaceutical companies (a campaign that continues to this very day, in broad daylight), that war on drugs cost many good people and their families their livelihood and freedoms. It is a shame that so far in the legislative process



surrounding legalization in this state, this has not been a major focus of our elected representatives. I am proud to see not only Sen. Dill's work moving forward but also that of Rep. Talbot-Ross in LD 846, Rep. Fecteau in LD 1113, and others in the legislature who have sponsored and co-sponsored these and similar legislation. I believe that this effort is more important than clarifying individuals' and businesses' ability to profit from commercial cannabis and more important than solidifying the state's ability to generate tax revenue from such.

We cannot build a just and equitable cannabis industry in the state of Maine if we don't focus on the injustice that is littered everywhere in the history of this plant. We owe it to our citizens to free them of the burdens of an unjust legal paradigm that we have now, finally, courageously decided to unwind even in the face of an uncaring and predatory Federal apparatus. Let us do whatever we can to restore to those individuals the freedoms and rights they should enjoy as citizens of this state and of this country.

Sincerely,
Mark Barnett