

Paul T. McCarrier - - Monroe, ME

Testimony on LD 365: "An Act to Support Compliance and Establish Graduated Sanctions Under the Maine Medical Use of Cannabis Act"

Chairman Hickman, Chairwoman Supica and members of the joint standing committee on veterans and legal affairs, my name is Paul T. McCarrier and I have been a caregiver since 2010. I've also worked on legislation since 2010. I own and operate a caregiver storefront, 1 Mill, in Belfast which opened in 2018.

In addition, I was an appointed member of the Office of Marijuana Policies Marijuana Working Group which met and worked on improving the medical cannabis program.

The need for graduated sanctions is based upon business realities. Mistakes happen working in complex and unclear regulatory environments. Thankfully, OCP has a new director who understands this and the department seems more

willing to work with us on clarifying compliance requirements.

All of us pay taxes and some of us pay sales tax. The burden of paying both of these makes it apparent we need graduated sanctions. If you make a mistake on a filing, does Maine Revenue Services revoke your sales license? No. Instead, they offer graduated sanctions, which can lead to fines and more. Most importantly, they work with you first to fix the problem and make sure the state gets their taxes. This is how OCP should operate. If there is a problem: offer guidance, correction, and then warnings. After all this, if a solution is not reached, then impose relevant fines etc.

We are tax paying businesses. We contribute to the State Treasury willingly through our monthly sales tax payments. If the tax department can work with us through simple mistakes, we hope OCP can do the same.

Finally, we need to have clarity on what is a violation - or, if there is a sanction. OCP has in the past week provided us with their compliance check list, which

their investigators use to determine if there is a need to escalate to enforcement.

Without a clear outline of violation tiers, it concerns me to think about what could be interpreted to be an infraction and to what severity. On top of all the other licenses, taxes and regulations we comply with, we don't need more anxiety over making sure we are in compliance. We hope the legislature can offer firm, clear, and fair tiers for us tax paying businesses.

I'm confident with new leadership at OCP we will see new cooperation and agreement between stakeholders and the agency. If this committee and the greater legislature endorses this measure, and we discover issues with enforcement, fairness or compliance, it can be addressed during the emergency session in 2024.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I will be available for the work session and can answer any questions you have.