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Testimony of Representative David Boyer

Presenting L.D. 555, An Act to Increase the Number of Mature Plants Allowed for the Home Cultivation of Cannabis

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and distinguished members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, I am asking for your support of L.D. 555, An Act to Increase the Number of Mature Plants Allowed for the Home Cultivation of Cannabis.

The citizen's initiative to tax and regulate cannabis like alcohol was passed by Maine voters in 2016. The initiative allowed for the home cultivation of cannabis by adults 21 years of age and older. As passed by voters, the initiative allowed specifically for six mature plants per adult.

The Maine Legislature established a Joint Select Committee on Marijuana Legalization Implementation. This committee made substantive changes to the initiative, reducing the number of mature plants an adult can grow and stripping social clubs from law. In my humble opinion, this was a slap in the face of Maine voters.

Over the last six years, Mainers have been allowed to cultivate cannabis for personal use. While there may be some neighborly squabbles from time to time, the sky certainly hasn't fallen like opponents predicted.

We are simply asking the Legislature to uphold the will of Maine voters.

There are practical reasons to restore the plant count as well. Growing cannabis outdoors in Maine isn't the easiest and with only three plants there isn't much room left for error. The plants are vulnerable to frost, wind, insects, and animals.

By only allowing just three plants, Mainers will be encouraged to grow massive plants. Indeed, some plants can grow up to 20 ft tall. While other strains grow short and wide. Large plants can restrict airflow and create an environment susceptible to mold.

In keeping with the theme of the 2016 campaign, Americans are allowed to brew 200 gallons of beer per household. This equates to 2,133 12oz servings of beer or roughly three bottles of beer a day, per person.

But cannabis isn't alcohol. Cannabis is safer than alcohol. For many Mainers it is a medicine and whether they are a patient or not, they use it as such. We have a right to medicine and a Right to Food. Home cultivation allows for Mainers to know exactly how their cannabis is grown and provides a more affordable alternative to retail stores.

I appreciate the committee's consideration of L.D. 555 and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.