



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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LD 541 *"An Act to Create Parity in the Taxation of Medicine"*

Honorable Chairs: Senator Grohoski and Representative Perry and the esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation, my name is Representative Ann Fredericks of Sanford and I urge you to support LD 541 and remove the sales tax on medicinal cannabis. Prescription medications are not taxed. Please stop the disparate taxation of this medication.

Maine has two Cannabis Programs: The Adult Use program which some call the recreational use program and the Medicinal Cannabis Program. I will speak exclusively about the medicinal cannabis program, which was operationalized in 2009. Plant based medicine utilized: to treat medical conditions, for its therapeutic effects, for symptom relief, as treatment for a medical diagnosis. I am a Nurse Practitioner, my daughter is a Registered Nurse and we have a medical cannabis facility, named Vetted. We evaluate and educate patients so that they select the right cannabis medication for their ailment. Similar to prescribed medication, this medicine is titrated and individualized to alleviate symptoms.

District 143 Sanford (part)

Many people have discontinued their conventional medications due to the undesirable side effect profile which may include weight gain, loss of libido, urinary retention or feeling “out of it” “in a haze” and manage their condition with the plant based medicine cannabis. THC is the compound in cannabis, which has brought the stigma, at high doses it can be psychoactive and cause impairment. THC at the proper dose though can be an effective sleep aid, pain reliever, anti-spasmodic and anti-anxiety agent without inducing impairment.

Medicinal cannabis has many product formulations some with low or no THC.

There are compounds beyond THC, called cannabinoids in cannabis, which result in no high, no cognitive impairment and have an abundance of healthful effects. To name one:

CBG: anti-inflammatory, anti-anxiety, lowers pressure, neuroprotective, inhibits tumor growth

Patients are effectively managing their medical conditions with this plant medicine in lieu of pharmaceuticals and it is dispensed via a med card not a prescription.

Effective Dec 2, 2022 President Biden signed into Law the Medical Marijuana and Cannabidiol Research Expansion Act, which allows for human studies and more. Scientific information about the medicinal effects will allow patients more treatment options. Epidolex is an FDA approved prescription cannabis medication to treat the seizure condition of Lennox Gestaut syndrome, Dravet Syndrome or tuberous sclerosis. Cannabis is proven medicine.

The #1 condition treated with cannabis is pain, chronic pain. Cancer pain, spinal pain, fibromyalgia, endometriosis and migraines. Many pain sufferers seek to avoid opiates and manage their condition with cannabis medicine. Pain sufferers

often have secondary conditions as a result of the pain such as anorexia and depression. Medicinal cannabis can treat pain while stimulating appetite and improve mood.

Under the Maine Medical Use of Cannabis Act Title 22, Chapter 558-C, a certified medical provider (MD, NP, PA) may issue medical cannabis certification (medical cannabis card) to patient that is "likely to receive therapeutic or palliative benefit from the medical use of marijuana to treat or alleviate the patient's medical diagnosis or symptoms associated with the diagnosis." The private and confidential assessment of the patient's medical history and discussion regarding the indication for medical cannabis results in the issuance of a medical cannabis certification on state issued tamper resistant paper. This process ensures restrictive access to medicinal cannabis.

In FY 21, Office of Cannabis Policy revenue for Medicinal Cannabis was approximately 20 million dollars from taxation and an additional 3.5 million dollars from fees. Expenditures for the Medical Cannabis program was approximately 1.7 million dollars. The Medical Cannabis program will be sustained without the 20 Million dollars of taxation revenue. Bill 541 proposes to discontinue the taxation on medicinal cannabis, and using FY 21 figures that equates to 20 Million in taxation but I assert this revenue is not a permanent loss for the state's economy. Mainers will NOT go home and stuff their mattresses with this money but they will put it in their pockets and buy goods and services from the current market. The revenue will be returned.

There are many other states whom do not have a sales tax on medicinal cannabis: CT, FL, MA, MN, NH, NJ, NY, UT ,VA, VM, WV, this is not a novel concept.

In closing Bill 541 is a win/win. It aligns taxation of medicines, it cuts taxes for medical cannabis patients, it allows those Mainers to return that revenue in goods & services of their choosing and the Maine economy has no loss of revenue.

Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation, please focus on the needs of the most vulnerable Mainers and cut taxes.

Taxation without Representation was a battle cry of the American Revolution and borne the Declaration of Independence. Medical Cannabis patients are taxed without a say. My say is to urge you to pass Bill 541 *"An Act to Create Parity in the Taxation of Medicine"*.