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

I am neither for nor against LD 541

Good afternoon Senate Chair and Representative Chair and respected members of the Taxation Committee Board,

My name is Derek Shirley. I am a medical cannabis patient, a proud cannabis felon for four ounces of flower. I have represented cannabis patients in multiple states to help patients fight for what we think/feel are basic human cannabis rights. And I am here today to speak on LD 541.

When I first saw this bill I thought; "well this is a no brainer, of course i support this" but then i started to think about it. Let's start with the obvious PROS, cannabis patients won't be charged sales taxes, but in reality, most cannabis shops and stores have the taxes figured into the price for patients OR some places offer discounts for checking in online, leaving a review etc, and more times than not that discount is 10% off their purchase, which is about 2 times the amount of the 5.5% sales taxes. Also it probably should add nurse practitioners and other people that can prescribe cannabis currently this bill states "5. Medicines. Sales of medicines for human beings sold on a doctor's prescription...."

Cons- So no sales tax in the states largest cash crop? Let that sink in. Thats a HUGE hole to fill and I think some caregiver businesses especially are worried that they will come up with new ways to fill that negative loss.

For example, this session LD 365: An Act to Support Compliance and Establish Graduated Sanctions Under the Maine Medical Use of Cannabis Act is going through the VLA committee right now. What's to say the department (Office of Cannabis Policy) won't overreach and overstep their authority to write fines to businesses to make up for the loss of sales tax to the state. Then in turn, nickel and diming the small farmers out of business, then in turn affecting patients' access to medicine. Another fear patients and caregivers have if you take sales tax away legislators and lawmakers will care less about the medical program, and in turn adult use will get more focus when it comes to protecting rights

So I guess the main fear/con is if that sale tax is completely lost, how will the state respond to said loss?