

My name is Susan Meehan from Sweden Maine. I am a Board member of the Maine Cannabis Coalition, and a founding member of the Cannabis Council of Maine. Thank you Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and honorable members of the VLA Committee. I came to Maine in 2013 to access the medical cannabis program for my then 11 year old daughter Cyndimae. I became her "caregiver" as her parent as required by Chapter 558C, and with the assistance of several caregivers, I learned to make concentrates from cannabis flower using food grade ethanol, and I learned to make medicine that was the most effective medicine Cyndimae ever used to control her intractable Dravet Syndrome Epilepsy. Since losing my daughter in 2016, I am ashamed to say I did not know the US government lied about cannabis, and I did not break laws much sooner to save my daughter – what would you do to save your child? As Dr. Martin Luther King said and as is printed on my arm together with one of Cyndimae's last drawings, "One has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws."

If I knew then, what I know now, Cyndimae would have used cannabis long before 23 failed anti-epileptic drugs with horrendous side effects including more seizures, respiratory arrest, cardiac arrest, addiction to benzodiazepines, barbiturates and anesthesia drugs. This bill, especially the amendment language, will make criminals of many of the 100,000 patients in Maine – that is nearly 10% of the voting population in Maine. If I knew then, what I know now, Cyndimae would have had millions fewer seizures in her short life, her heart would not have been so tired, and well – the what ifs populate my mind 24-7.

Many of the suggestions in this bill have been heard by the industry and properly rejected by the legislature over the past 10 years. We remember when the Health Committee came after kief and concentrates, we remember the days of micromanaging what belongs between doctor and patient in confidence and privacy with "qualifying patient" criteria. My medical care is between me and my doctor. Mind your business and your own healthcare Going backward is like the what ifs – pointless. I will not stand by idle when the rights of over 100,000 patients are attempted to be trodden upon. I will not be silent in the face of this attempt to make parents and patients powerless, to drive parents and patients to the illicit market, and to blatantly attack the lifeblood of medicine making with cannabis – cannabis concentrates.

Because we lived in a state in which pediatric use of cannabis was not allowed, and the medical program is run by one monopoly, there was no legal option for Cyndimae in Connecticut. When we made the decision to try cannabis, we knew only that cannabis was smoked. We were proud parents of DARE graduates, a teacher and a firefighter set of "good parents," solicited by our community's schools to present on career day, field day and as field trip chaperones. I gave my 11 year old cannabis and wow. Cannabis stopped her seizures. Back then I only knew that cannabis was smoked. I knew nothing of concentrates and making medicine or tincture. But it worked, for 92 days, the longest Cyndimae ever went without a seizure. We called it the breath of life. On day 45 my friend, the grower, was arrested. On day 90 we ran out of Amsterdam's caramelicious. On day 92, Cyndimae was in status epilepticus in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, and her neurologist told us to make arrangements to move her to a legal state that had options for kids without delay. Please do not drive parents, children and other patients to the illicit market. This bill will force parents and adult patients backward and to dangerous illicit markets where cannabis is sometimes laced with fentanyl for example. No one is dying from their medical cannabis in Maine, but we have countless success stories. Please deem LD94 ought not to pass. In my written testimony, I have specifically analyzed the points of this amendment language. Thank you.

Specific Issues with LD 94

1. Qualifying condition list is outdated. Patient-healthcare provider discussions, diagnosis, recommendations and prescriptions are confidential. Some missing conditions: ADHD, autism, self-injurious behaviors, anxiety, cancer, (yes, cancer itself.), pain, migraines, sleep disorders, etc, etc. There are so many pharmaceutical options with so many deadly side effects as compared to cannabis.
2. OCP currently and illegally sends law enforcement officers into caregiver facilities – why would we ever trust them to keep our patients safe? When will they hire law enforcement to start sting operations on patient homes? Our patients will be forced to the illicit market.
3. Cannabis Concentrates are not “medical cannabis?” Astounding. There are cancer patients who consume 1 to 5 grams of cannabis concentrates a day. There are patients who have replaced opiates with cannabis concentrates to treat their pain. This is unreasonable.
4. OCP cannot be entrusted with confidential patient information. Databases are breached daily in this world. Keep our patients out of OCP databases. By requiring that OCP distribute patient cards, confidential patient information is shared with a regulatory agency that is not trusted by the industry it regulates. This discussion has been had in the program. The answer is still no. We will not entrust OCP with confidential patient information.
5. Most parents are not “court appointed legal guardian”s of their children. They are simply parents. By this proposed language, a parent would have to go to court to be appointed their own child’s legal guardian. Unreasonable..
6. Many Maine citizens choose alternative healthcare for their own personal and confidential reasons. They may choose to see, for example, a naturopath doctor. The definitions of a healthcare provider or medical provider ought be expanded, not deflated.
7. On JULY 16, 2021, at great expense, the Maine Cannabis Coalition and the State of Maine lost our residency case in the Federal Circuit Court in Boston. Mandating that the industry participants(caregivers and dispensaries) are state residents is not legal per federal circuit court.