

Testimony – LD 1996

My name is Casey Raymond, and I am here as the CFO of Cannabis Cured on behalf of the company and its owners. Cannabis Cured is currently the largest licensed cannabis company in the State of Maine, with 9 adult use recreational stores and 3 licensed medical dispensaries.

I am here to ask you to support LD 1996 to prevent further chaos in the cannabis industry in Maine. First, it is important to understand the evolution that has taken place in the hemp processing industry over the past few years. The hemp industry started as one that extracted and processed the cannabinoid CBD, a great product for children's seizures among other benefits. With little oversight or regulation, it has morphed into a scientifically and technologically advanced industry with the ability to isolate and extract the exact same cannabinoids found in cannabis plants with the same psychoactive compounds and in the same concentrations. Due to these advancements coupled with the lack of education and regulation, the responsibility to protect our communities, citizens, and children has fallen on the individual state government's shoulders.

Currently in Maine we are dealing with an out of control medical cannabis industry that allows for corruption and has the FBI, DEA and Border Patrol questioning why there is no accountability or oversight of our industry. Maine is the only cannabis industry in the country that does not require tracking of medical product. Tracking that provides transparency, public safety, and structure which allows law enforcement probable cause to take action to prevent and stop dangerous environments and operations that unfortunately exist in many of our communities today. There is no surprise that we are hearing of multiple raids of illegal drug cartels operating medical cannabis facilities in the state. There is no surprise that there is suspicion that there are hundreds more illegal operations in Maine.

I am here today to ask you to stand against the expansion of another unregulated and dangerous grey-area industry in Maine. We have already seen the impact of the unregulated medical cannabis market on recreational cannabis operators, who are paying the lion's share of taxes, licensing, and security fees. I ask you, "why would we consider opening the door to another unregulated cannabinoid market that would likely be able to circumvent public safety standards and state taxes?"

Please take the time to understand the complexities and implications of allowing the release of additional unregulated, untested, and therefore potentially harmful synthetic-hemp derived products throughout the State. The Maine Recreational Cannabis Industry already offers products with the same cannabinoids, but does so with regulations, guardrails and the ability for strict oversight to ensure they are safe for consumers. Please support the bill and requested legislation brought before you today.