



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **John Andrews**

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February 21st, 2024

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name John Andrews and I represent District 79 in western Maine. I am here today to present my bill LD 2204 "An Act to Combat Racketeering in Scheduled Drugs by Certain Organizations"

Illegal marijuana grows being run by a network of organized criminals from adversarial nations is a clear and present danger to the safety and welfare of our state as well as our ethos of 'Life the way it should be.'

All over our state, especially the rural areas, single family homes are off the market. They're off the market not because they are full of warm cheer and growing families, but because they are full of thousands of illegal, unregulated and unsafe marijuana grows by often elderly Chinese nationals who are living lives of indentured servitude to the gangsters who run these networks amassing large and very lucrative profits.

The illegal and unregulated or tested weed is bundled and sent out of state to be sold in parts unknown in black markets for maximum profits. This is a vast criminal conspiracy that must be addressed.

The only problem is that our prosecutors do not have a tool to charge for conspiracy currently at their disposal. The main and most important feature of LD 2204 is the aspect that puts little RICO laws on the books. These Racketeering Influenced Criminal Organization laws exist on a Federal level, but this bill would allow prosecutors on a state level to investigate and charge for conspiracy to hopefully clean up this mess that is a giant spider web of interconnected networks operating all over our state.

I intentionally left the scope of these state level RICO laws narrow. They only pertain to aggravated manufacture and cultivation of schedule drugs. The bill would also allow Prosecutors to charge conspiracy for a network of Fentanyl dealers as well. 2204 will be the best tool in the tool box for Prosecutors for go after criminal networks of schedule drug manufacturers and traffickers.

District 79 Paris, Sumner, West Paris, Woodstock

The bill also tries to get these buildings that were once homes back to their original condition to aid in the housing crisis. Upon conviction the properties would be seized and assets used to rehabilitate or rebuild these homes to get working families back into them.

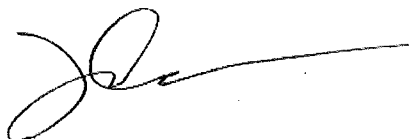
The bill also addresses the energy use of these grow sites. Their illegal carbon footprint is humongous. Permitting and reporting would be required and I encourage the committee to add language that would make it easy for home owners installing EV charging sites to breeze through the process. These are not the individuals who the police are interested in finding.

I would also urge you to add an emergency preamble to this piece of legislation.

This bill takes a serious approach to a solving a clear and present danger to our way of life and the safety of small towns all over Maine. I implore you to please dig into the bill, learn and work together to deliver a finished product that can get a unanimous report of the committee.

Thank you for you time and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Andrews', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Representative John Andrews  
Maine House District 79