



To The Committee on Judiciary  
February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### **LD 2215 OUGHT NOT TO PASS**

Distinguished chairs and member of the Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Mark Barnett. I am a resident of Auburn, the Policy Director for the Maine Craft Cannabis Association (MCCA), and the owner of a medical cannabis caregiver store in Portland. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the MCCA, a group of small cannabis business owners, patients, and health professionals certifying patients in the Maine medical cannabis market.

We urge this committee to vote 'Ought Not to Pass' on LD 2215 for two reasons. The first, and most important, is that it represents a step backwards in the privacy rights of participants in the medical cannabis program, a program that has legalized commerce that is still federally illegal and whose participants enjoy no protections from federal actions in that vein. It is not sufficient for the state to solely look after the rights of patients in this conversation—business owners and health professionals who participate in the medical cannabis program bear the greatest risk of unjust federal action and also the greatest costs for participation in the program, including federal charges. The language contained here in LD 2215 was not vetted with members of the community that it seeks to regulate and who have the lived, day-to-day experience we believe is necessary to guide our state's approach to participant confidentiality. The cannabis industry is not like other industries. Our rights to confidentiality of information protect us from the War on Drugs that the federal government—and some, unfortunately, within our own state government—are still enthusiastically pursuing to this day, a policy disaster which Maine voters and this Legislature have rejected time and time again.

The second reason we ask this Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass is that the committee of jurisdiction for cannabis matters has historically been Veterans and Legal Affairs, whose members have significant experience with the subject matter and who are still hearing numerous cannabis bills which would be materially impacted by this bill's changes to Title 22. That committee has not only worked on dozens of bills this subject matter touches on but also formed a special subcommittee to examine these issues. Included in the subcommittee's initial findings were that our state statutes still contain numerous and often extreme examples of stigma and prejudice towards operators of cannabis businesses and consumers of cannabis. Our program rules, both existing and especially proposed, do as well. This bill is not simply what it purports to be. In that light, we respectfully ask that this conversation continue to happen in the Veterans and Legal Affairs committee.

Sincerely,

Mark Barnett  
Policy Director, Maine Craft Cannabis Association