

Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, my name is Elizabeth Hayes, I am a MOFGA certified farmer growing hemp, garlic and medicinal herbs. I am a medical cannabis caregiver and operate Art and Craft with my husband. Our farm is certified under MOFGA's clean cannabis program. We support LD 40. We believe it is critical to include and support the legacy growers and traditional market producers who built this industry, who have supported medical patients long before the legislature did, and have been harmed by prohibition. Their decades of plant breeding and product development bring incredible value and quality products to this industry. This bill advances justice and equity. I will submit more specific notes in writing, but I would like to take this time to read from testimony given by John Hudak on June 14, 2022 to the Maryland General Assembly House Cannabis Referendum and Legalization Workgroup. In this excerpt he is talking about considerations for creating state cannabis regulations.

"... policy makers must also avoid unnecessary regulatory complexity. A regulatory landscape that makes it difficult for business owners and consumers to operate within the market generates direct and indirect costs. The direct costs are obvious—additional staff must be hired, staff must work longer hours, and each of those costs money, effectively generating an additional tax on the consumer through increased prices. At the same time, regulatory complexity is easier to navigate and digest for larger, better funded, better staffed companies with significant experience. Smaller, less well funded, less experienced business owners may struggle to operate and succeed in that complex regulatory environment. And we know the business that will face such struggles will be disproportionately women-owned, disproportionately minority-owned, and/or be run by new entrepreneurs or some combination of those three.

Ultimately, regulatory policy is social equity policy, and the choices you make in designing a regulatory system directly impacts how equitable your system will be in operation. To achieve greater balance, greater parity, greater equity, the legislature should lead from the start and ultimately charge a potential regulatory agency to foster an environment of cooperation, patience, and education, especially for new business owners, small business owners, and business owners from non-traditional backgrounds."

Thank you to Director Hudak for offering Maryland that wise guidance. And thank you to Senator Hickman and all the dedicated advocates who worked on this bill language which I think brings greater balance, parity and equity to Maine's cannabis programs. LD40 recognizes *"the codification of stigma and the presumption of illegal or criminal behavior by cannabis establishments, their agents, employees and contractors"* that exists in current regulations and proposed rules, and it seeks to advance justice.

We are pleased to see it brought to the table and ask you all to support LD40.

ISSUES OF CONCERN:

DEFINITION OF CANNABIS PLANT:

Part A: Definition 5: "cannabis plant" :

All cannabis is cannabis sativa. The varieties of indica and ruderalis are not separate species. This is evidenced by their ability to outcross with any cannabis sativa plant.

PROHIBITED ACTS BY MINORS: I understand that this is a copy&paste from alcohol regulations, but I am concerned that it introduces consequences that disproportionately would affect minors who experience family instability and dysfunction, who don't live with their legal guardian or who's legal guardian is largely absent. Meanwhile, youth who have guardians present would be exempted from seeing repercussions. It seems inherently unjust to me. I also take major issue with the suspension of a minors license. Loss of license in a rural state that lacks public transportation could be incredibly damaging. I have a friend who lost their license as a teenager due to a cannabis possession offense and it led them down a road to devastation as they kept driving to get to work and were continually charged for driving without a license, leading to over \$20,000 in fines that kept them from moving forward in life. I understand the intention to have parity with alcohol, but this section of law doesn't sit right with me.

Age of employment raised from 21 to 17 Is this for medical as well or just adult use? There should be parity there.

LOVE TO SEE IT:

- Preamble : thank you for acknowledging the presence of stigma. RIGHT ON!
- removing background checks for registrants and their employees
- explicitly outlining the right of direct-to-consumer sales by caregivers
- clarifying that caregivers may form businesses like any other business
- clarifying and reinforcing business and patient confidentiality
- limiting and specifying what the OCP may call 'violations'
- limiting suspension and revocation of caregiver registrations to true threats to the public safety.
- raising the age of employment at a cannabis facility from 21 to 17, in parity with alcohol regulations
- allowing licensees to determine what type of tracking system they use, not OCP. This is commonsense. In my MOFGA recordkeeping and tracking for mass balance audits and trace-back audits I use production logs and spreadsheets to account for all material from seed to sale. This should be allowed in the cannabis programs as well.