

Honorable Chairperson Senator Craig Hickman, Honorable Chairperson Representative Laura Supica, and Honorable Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee,

My name is Jennifer Belcher, and I serve as President of the Maine Cannabis Union, an affiliate of IAMAW, representing both Maine's Medical Cannabis and Adult Use industries. On behalf of our members, I am here today in strong support of LD 584—An Act to Make the Director of Cannabis Policy an Appointed Position Subject to Confirmation by the Legislature.

For too long, the cannabis industry in Maine has operated without the essential checks and balances that other regulated industries benefit from. The ability to confirm the Director of Cannabis Policy through legislative oversight would provide much-needed accountability, transparency, and alignment with the realities of the industry.

Currently, small businesses, caregivers, and industry leaders are forced to address concerns on an individual basis, overwhelming both regulators and lawmakers with constant issues that could be resolved proactively with a more structured and collaborative approach. By making this position subject to legislative confirmation, we ensure that the Director of OCP is not only accountable to the Governor but also to the people, businesses, and patients who rely on a stable, fair regulatory framework.

A confirmed director would serve as a neutral, qualified, and informed voice—one that considers the needs of small businesses, patients, and stakeholders, while also balancing the regulatory responsibilities of the state. Furthermore, the legislative confirmation process provides an essential safeguard, preventing unilateral decisions that may not reflect the economic realities or best interests of the industry.

As part of this effort, we also strongly support a yearly review process to assess the program's successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. Regular oversight will ensure that the OCP remains responsive, adaptable, and committed to fostering an industry that thrives rather than struggles under unnecessary burdens.

LD 584 is the perfect checks and balances solution to an industry that has long been subject to regulatory overreach without the appropriate oversight mechanisms. We urge this committee to support this measure and take an important step toward creating a fair, transparent, and sustainable cannabis program in Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Belcher- President Maine Cannabis Union Association - Affiliate of IAMAW-
International Association of Machinist and Aerospace Workers

Maine Cannabis Union Members and Executive Board