

DATE, MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2025

MAINE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS & LEGAL AFFAIRS [VLA]

SUBJECT: L.D.929

SENATE CHAIR HICKMAN

HOUSE CHAIR SUPICA

SENATE MINORITY LEAD CHAIR TIMBERLAKE

HOUSE MINORITY LEAD CHAIR BOYER

DISTINGUISHED VLA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

DEAR COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY TODAY. MY NAME IS TAMMY SMITH AND I HAVE BEEN IN THE MEDICAL PROGRAM SINCE 2017. OUR FAMILY BEGAN AS HOME-BASED CAREGIVERS/CULTIVATORS. IN 2020, WE OPENED A MEDICAL RETAIL STORE AND, IN THE FALL OF 2023, WE OPENED A STOREFRONT IN THE RECREATIONAL MARKET.

I AM TESTIFYING THIS MORNING AS THE BOARD CHAIR FOR MMCM, A TRADE ASSOCIATION WHOSE MISSION IS TO ADVOCATE, LEGISLATE AND EDUCATION FOR THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY IN MAINE.

MMCM IS NEITHER FOR OR AGAINST L.D. 929

WE ARE FUNDAMENTALLY SUPPORTIVE OF ANY LAWS THAT ALLEVIATE THE BURDENS ON OUR SENIORS AND VETERANS. WHILE THIS BILL MAY BE A GENEROUS STEP FORWARD IN ALLOWING THESE POPULATIONS TO SELF-CERTIFY, WITH THE POTENTIAL TO REMOVE SOME OF THE BARRIERS THEY FACE WHEN USING CANNABIS, THE PROPOSED CHANGES MUST BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED.

SENIORS AND VETERANS ARE AMONG THE HIGHEST-RISK MEDICAL PATIENTS, AND MANY REQUIRE AN ANNUAL CONSULTATION WITH A CERTIFYING PROVIDER TO ASSESS CHANGES IN THEIR HEALTH AND MEDICATIONS. MANY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS, HOWEVER, ARE RELUCTANT TO DISCLOSE THEIR CANNABIS USE TO OTHER MEDICAL PROVIDERS DUE TO FEAR OF LOSING THAT PROVIDER, STIGMA OR EMBARRASSMENT. THIS CREATES A RISK, ESPECIALLY WHEN THERE ARE HIGH-RISK MEDICATIONS THAT MAY INTERACT WITH CANNABIS—INTERACTIONS THAT PATIENTS MAY NOT EVEN BE AWARE OF.

WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT COULD BE A STEP TOWARDS REMOVING THE MEDICAL PROGRAM AND IT'S PROTECTIONS FOR THE PATIENTS TO CREATE ONE ADULT USE MARKET IN MAINE

IN CONCLUSION, WHILE WE ALL SUPPORT THE SPIRIT OF THE BILL, OUR ORGANIZATION'S LEADERSHIP IS DIVIDED IN OUR BELIEFS THAT MAINTAINING AN ANNUAL CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO SAFEGUARD THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF OUR SENIORS AND VETERANS. WE FEEL THIS BILL NEEDS CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO AVOID UNINTEDED CONSIQUENCES.EACH MEMBER WILL SUBMIT THEIR OWN TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF OR AGAINST L.D. 929

TAMMY SMITH

BOARD CHAIR MMCM

SMALL BUSINESS OWNER

NEWPORT, MAINE