

Testimony of Jennifer Belcher

President, Maine Cannabis Union Association

In Opposition to LD 104 and LD 1847

Before the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

Date: May 5, 2025

Good morning Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and honorable members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee.

My name is Jennifer Belcher, and I am the President of the Maine Cannabis Union Association, proudly affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM). I'm here today on behalf of hundreds of caregivers, their employees, and the thousands of patients they serve, to voice strong opposition to both LD 104 and LD 1847.

These bills would make sweeping changes to the medical cannabis program—changes that mirror a system already struggling under the Adult Use model. Applying that same structure to medical cannabis would deeply harm a program that has thrived for over a decade by remaining personal, community-based, and grounded in patient-caregiver trust.

One of the most harmful aspects of these proposals is the push for mandatory testing and track-and-trace systems. While these may seem like common-sense safeguards, they present major financial and operational challenges to small, local caregiver businesses—most of whom are working out of family farms, homesteads, or small storefronts with limited staff and budgets. These are not large-scale operations. They are everyday Mainers trying to provide medicine directly to their neighbors and communities.

The medical cannabis community already works hard to ensure quality and safety. Most caregivers choose to test their products, particularly when they are serving patients with serious health conditions. And when patients want test results, they get them. Patients trust their caregivers—because they know them, because they can speak directly to them, and because they can get real answers about what they're putting into their bodies.

The ability to offer samples is also a crucial part of care. When a patient is just beginning cannabis treatment—especially for something as serious as cancer or a neurological condition—there's an element of trial and error. Sampling allows us to help them without forcing them to spend large amounts of money on something that may not work. We're not handing out bags of product on the street. We're offering a labeled, measured, and often custom-prepared dose so they can see how their body reacts. This is real, responsible care.

If these mandates go into effect, it will not only eliminate the ability to offer samples—it will shut down many of these small businesses entirely. We aren't opposed to testing. We support safe

thresholds, especially when they're built on sound science. But we need policies that make sense for family-run businesses, not just ones that can afford the high cost of compliance.

Caregivers are not the problem. We are the backbone of this program. We treat everything from minor injuries and anxiety to cancer and end-of-life care. And we do it with compassion, dedication, and a direct line to the people we serve. These bills would unravel all of that—and in doing so, they would strip patients of safe, local access and push them toward unregulated, unsafe alternatives.

Please protect the caregivers and patients who have made this program what it is today. Reject LD 104 and LD 1847, and let's work together on solutions that keep care local, affordable, and rooted in trust.

Thank you for your time.

Jennifer Belcher

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