

## Testimony in Support of LD 1840

By Jennifer Belcher, Medical Cannabis Patient, Cancer Survivor, Mother, and Business Owner

Before the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

Date: 5-5-25

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

My name is Jennifer Belcher. I come to you today not as the President of the Maine Cannabis Union—although I will be submitting formal testimony in that role—but simply as myself: a mother, a medical cannabis patient, a Stage 3B cancer survivor, and someone who owes her life to Maine's medical cannabis program.

LD 1840 addresses many of the issues that have shut down medical cannabis businesses, stripped patients of access to the medicine they depend on, and caused untold suffering and financial devastation for families like mine. This bill has the power to fix what's broken—and I can tell you from experience, that fix is desperately needed.

I ran my caregiver business out of my home for four years before opening a retail store and edible kitchen, which I've operated for the past three years. I loved my work and the ability to help patients every day—until my life changed forever with a diagnosis I never expected: Stage 3B vulvar cancer. It's a rare cancer, typically found in women over 60. I was 36.

I was given 50/50 odds of survival. Everything moved fast—treatment at Dana Farber, surgery, plastic surgery, and more. Within three months, I went from diagnosis to operating table. But I knew something most patients don't: I knew about Rick Simpson Oil, or RSO—a full-spectrum cannabis extract with powerful medicinal properties. It's like the essential oil of the cannabis plant. I'd spent years researching, educating, and supporting cancer patients through its use. Now it was my turn to try it myself.

The standard RSO protocol is 90 grams in 90 days. That's a high dose. It makes you sleepy, foggy—but what better conditions for healing than sleep, healthy food, and natural medicine?

From the day of my diagnosis to the day of my surgeries was exactly 92 days. I began treatment immediately: no sugar, low carbs, lots of vegetables, and as much RSO as I could tolerate. I worked my way up to 2–3 grams per day, holding that dose for the last 37 days before surgery.

My PET scan showed cancer in both groin lymph nodes—6mm and 3mm. But when they were removed, one node was completely clear. The tumor itself had shrunk to less than half its original size. That shrinkage was the difference between keeping my womanhood—or losing it, along with needing both colostomy and ileostomy bags, and over a year of painful recovery. RSO helped save me from that.

After surgery came chemo and radiation. I found out I was allergic to every single pharmaceutical they gave me for side effects: steroids, opioids, anti-nausea meds—you name it. My doctors worried I wouldn't complete treatment.

But I did. I showed up. I drove myself to most appointments. I kept working. I cared for my kids. Yes, I was in excruciating pain. Yes, I vomited constantly. But I made it through—because of edibles, RSO, and CBD. That's how I survived. And now, the same cancer center that treated me refers other patients to me regularly. I educate doctors and staff on how to use these plant medicines effectively.

I'm one story—but I represent thousands. Thousands of patients, families, and caregivers across Maine who rely on a medical program that has been chipped away piece by piece. LD 1840 could begin to heal that damage.

As someone who's lived every angle of this program—as a caregiver, a business owner, and a patient—I'm asking you personally to support LD 1840. Fix what's broken. Restore what works. Protect what saves lives.

Thank you.

Jennifer Belcher

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