

## Hebert, Michelle

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**From:** Kara Bertrand <karapbertrand@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 5, 2025 8:27 AM  
**To:** Cmte VLA  
**Subject:** Medical cannabis laws LD104 and LD1847

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**This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.**

Good morning esteemed politicians and law makers, and to the cannabis community of Maine.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Kara, and I am here as a caregiver, a patient, and an advocate—not just in the formal sense, but in the most human sense possible. I have relied on Maine’s medical cannabis program for nearly a decade, and today, I want to share why it’s not just a program—it’s been our lifeline.

Before I met my husband, he survived what should have been an unsurvivable car crash. He was ejected from a vehicle and sustained 35 broken bones, three skull fractures, and a traumatic brain injury that included frontal lobe shearing. He was given a 1% chance of survival. And yet—by some miracle—he lived.

But survival came with a steep cost. He had to relearn everything—how to walk, how to talk, even how to swallow. His brain injury altered not just his physical abilities, but his personality, his emotional regulation, and his mental health. The impulse control issues, the depression, the anger outbursts, the anxiety attacks—they came in crashing waves, and they were relentless.

Doctors did what they could. He was prescribed medication after medication—antidepressants, antipsychotics, mood stabilizers, sedatives. Each pill intended to treat a symptom, but each came with side effects that often created new problems of their own.

It was through medical cannabis that we finally found a light.

Cannabis didn’t cure his brain injury—but it gave us something that the prescriptions never could: stability. It helped calm his mind without numbing his soul. It improved his sleep, reduced his anxiety, quelled anger outbursts, and gave him back a sense of control over his own life.

And just as importantly—it gave me the chance to manage his care holistically, and to reduce our reliance on pharmaceuticals that made things worse instead of better.

Maine’s medical cannabis program gave us more than medicine. It gave us hope. It gave us dignity. It gave us a framework to participate in healing, not just treating.

But lately, many of us who depend on this program are growing anxious. We see increasing regulation, growing barriers for caregivers, and what sometimes feels like a shift away from the patient-first philosophy that built this community. The retailers and cultivators that we trust and that we rely on for our medicine, are at risk under LD 104 and LD 1847. Over regulation is expensive to the customer and cannabis businesses. Like we're seeing in other states like Nevada and Massachusetts— it harms revenue and drives up prices for patients.

High-dose cannabis products are not a luxury—they are a necessity for patients living with chronic pain, cancer, epilepsy, and a host of other debilitating conditions. For many of us, these higher doses are the only effective option to manage symptoms and maintain any quality of life. Restricting access to them would not only be medically disruptive, but potentially dangerous.

It's important to recognize that Maine has become a trusted destination for patients seeking this kind of care. In fact, many medical retailers report that 30% to 35% of their sales come from out-of-state medical patients, which is a significant portion of revenue and tax dollars. These individuals travel long distances to obtain the specific formulations and dosages they cannot find elsewhere—often because their own states do not offer the same level of access or compassion. If we cap THC limits in edibles, we will not only be limiting access for Maine patients, but also turning away those who rely Maine's medical market from beyond the borders.

That revenue, and more importantly,

that trust, will be lost.

I urge this office to remember: behind every regulation, every policy decision, there are real people. Patients who are vulnerable. Families who are stretched thin. Caregivers who carry the weight of someone else's survival every single day. We are not statistics—we are the very reason this program exists.

My husband is alive today. He's not just surviving—he's healing. He has returned to teaching high school. He's living a normal life again. And medical cannabis has played a critical role in that. Please, don't take steps that make his medicine less accessible to us.

Strengthen the program, give support caregivers and patient — and build up our cultivators and retailers that we love, and depend on for quality, safe cannabis. We need to protect the small growers and mom & pop shops who truly care about their patients. Please ensure that the focus stays where it belongs: on the patients.

Thank you for listening to my story. And thank you for continuing to protect the program that helps people like us live with dignity and hope.