

**Testimony of Paige Costa  
to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs**

**In Support of**

**LD 353, *an Act to Establish Medical Marijuana Cooperatives* and  
LD 421, *An Act to Increase the Number of Plants a Medical Marijuana Caregiver May Cultivate***

**March 1, 2021**

Good morning, Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Paige Costa. I am currently enrolled in the Master's program at Thomas College and will be graduating with my MBA in May. In conjunction, I am a co-founder of North Star Apothecary, a medical marijuana retail store in located in Fairfield. I am testifying today in support of LDs 353 and 421.

**LD 353 would allow for the establishment of medical marijuana cooperatives.**

Maine was built on a rich tradition of family farms, a majority of our neighbors in this state continue these long-standing traditions into the present day. However, our state and industries within it are evolving – no longer is our main export potatoes or blueberries – but cannabis. By prohibiting the formation of marijuana cooperatives, the OMP is placing a huge burden on the family farmer that has made – or is working to make - this their legacy. Those of us who wish to build a true 21<sup>st</sup> century family farm and be a part of the tremendous, historical growth this state's cannabis industry is and will experience in years to come. Cultivating high quality cannabis is no easy feat, and almost impossible to do on your own. If the law-abiding caregivers of this state deem a partner trustworthy – and choose to embark on an entrepreneurial venture together, why prohibit a business venture that will contribute to the jobs and overall economic state of our beloved state?

**LD 421 would increase the number of mature plants that a medical marijuana caregiver may cultivate from 30 to 60, and the number of immature plants from 60 to 120.**

For a caregiver to own and solely provide their store with cannabis flower and the proper mix of concentrates and pre-rolls, 30 plants is the absolute bare minimum flower count that they can get by. For companies like mine who wish to vertically integrate all production in the future, there simply isn't enough material to work with the current plant count topping out at 30 plants. With an increased maximum plant count, you're allowing caregivers to establish their own niche markets, creating and experimenting with new flavors and ancillary products we wish to bring to the market as safely as possible. On top of everything else, you're allowing caregivers to retain enough of the

medicine that they put their blood, sweat, and tears into for themselves, so they can treat their own ailments, and continue enabling others to do the same.

I ask that you please support LD 353 and LD 421 to allow for my family's company, and all the others like us - the opportunity to comfortably plant our roots and do our part to be on the right side of history – providing some of the best medical cannabis in the country. The passage of these bills would not only increase the already numerous roadblocks to formation for cannabis companies but make it almost impossible.

Thank you all for your time and attention today, and thank you, Representatives Warren and Collings, for bringing these proposals forward.