



In Support of LD 421

An Act To Increase the Number of Plants a Medical Marijuana Caregiver May Cultivate

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Alysia Melnick and I am here on behalf of the Maine Craft Cannabis Association, a diverse community of independent cannabis professionals committed to building and promoting an authentic craft cannabis industry in Maine through sensible public policy and responsible business practices. I have worked on developing and improving Maine's laws and policies related to medical cannabis in Maine for over a decade, focusing access and privacy protections for Maine medical marijuana patients and their caregivers and moving towards full decriminalization and legalization. I am also an ongoing appointed member of Maine's Marijuana Advisory Commission and am here in support of LD 421, An Act To Increase the Number of Plants a Medical Marijuana Caregiver May Cultivate.

We support this relatively small and discreet change in statute because it will help ensure access to the wide range of strains and products for approved patients and support the businesses across Maine that produce and provide this medicine to patients in Maine. Simply put - if there are caregivers who have a strain or product that is desired widely due to its quality or therapeutic benefits, patient access won't be obstructed simply based on an outdated and arguably arbitrary number. And other proponents outline in their testimony some of the other, very technical cultivation practices that would be helped from this change, to Maine patients' and small business' benefit.

Maine has approved access to cannabis for medical use for over 20 years. And this legislature has heard countless stories from patients whose lives have been dramatically improved, or even saved by use of this medicine. We have medical marijuana caregivers who have bred and developed specific cannabis or cannabis products that could benefit more patients in Maine, or could allow them the flexibility in cultivation practices to better serve existing patients but-for requirements to be vertically integrated (disallowance of 100% wholesale) and limits - such as plant or patient count.

In terms of local control, municipalities are experienced in understanding and pivoting in response to changing laws both on the state and federal level. This change should be no different. And localities have and are expressing their position and placing limits on these businesses through land use and zoning regulations, for example. There are quite a few tools at their disposal to regulate these businesses and they have and will continue to do so.

As you've heard, marijuana is [Maine's most valuable cash crop](#). The industry is thriving, providing tremendous revenue to the state without assistance from the federal government such as PPP relief, earned income credits or FDIC banking privileges. And it's Maine's [medical cannabis industry](#) at the heart of those numbers, with industry sales on track to hit [\\$266 million for 2020](#). That is more than potatoes (\$184 million) and more than twice milk (\$124 million).

The current law has evolved over those decades and should continue to do so. The change proposed in this bill would be one small way to continue to reflect the current state of the market and support these businesses that have proven so valuable and resilient and who have continued to provide incredible value throughout the state through job creation, patient care, and tax revenue - even during this pandemic.

We urge you to vote ought to pass, and thank you for your consideration.