

Arleigh Kraus
Warren

In Opposition of LD 881 and 882 : Ought Not To Pass

Arleigh A. Kraus
Warren, Maine

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Arleigh Kraus. I am a registered cannabis caregiver, farmer, and business owner in Warren. I am a founding member of the Maine Craft Cannabis Association, I am a member of Seed2Health Learning Health Alliance, and I am the Chair of the Adult and Medical Marijuana Committee for the Town of Warren.

I am testifying today in opposition of LD 881 and LD 882.

LD 881 has been written to prevent a caregiver from having a retail store unless applying with a new license type and to further limit the size of an immature marijuana plant by several inches.

While these may be pitched as innocuous housekeeping changes they are far from that. Taking away one's right to have a retail space to sell the goods they produce and provide to their patients cannot be viewed as anything other than deliberately ending the livelihood of Maine caregivers of the medical marijuana program and access of the citizens of Maine to their medicine. Where is the justification for such a move?

I ask you to question this motive. Maine is the most rural state in the United States and approximately 61 percent of the population resides in a rural area. Preventing marijuana farmers such as myself from continuing to grow businesses by nonsensical new rules which would put more cost on our business with new permits for fabricated and flat out made up reasons is outrageous.

Reducing the size of an immature plant by several inches is also impeding the ability of a cannabis farmer to do their job. I can give you a parallel example of agriculture food production farmers having restrictions on the size of immature tomato plants or heads of lettuce. Does this happen? No. Has there been any input from marijuana farmers in Maine about this rule? No. Where is the input coming from to change the rules which have worked very well for over 20 years? Cannabis Public Policy Consultants and Andrew Freedman. Andrew Freedman who is also partnered with Big Tobacco, Big Alcohol and Big Money is at the tip of the pen writing our new and "safer" rules for Maine. So safe in fact that Mr. Freedman together with Phillip Morris, Molson, Anheuser Bush and you can probably guess at this point all the other names also involved, has started a federal policy group to keep us all "safe" from marijuana while they lobby for control of the whole pie. Like with the dairy farms which created independence and industry for this state and so many others, the corporations know how to crush and capture. They are doing it right here in real time.

LD 882

Punishing business owners with fines and sentences which do not match the offence by way of being massively unreasonable is a tactic only imposed on the weak and oppressed. Where do \$10,000 fines factor when we are looking at a network of 3,000 plus caregivers from across a state with a median income of \$29,818 based on 2019 census bureau data. People losing their jobs, farms, ability to take care of their families? Errors in accounting, software, human or computer could end in fines which would destroy a business. Metrc the track and trace program that the state has contracted with is run by a current business partner of Andrew Freedman named Lewis Koski who has been at the center of several scandals which revolve around inaccurate and misleading data, over charging participants of other states medical marijuana programs, and persistent and critical errors in software. Placing the onus of an enforcement program's error onto the medical program participant is nonsensical but this is what would happen. We are not talking about corporations getting a slap on the wrist, we are talking about the lives and welfare of the citizens of our state.

In no way are we in the medical marijuana industry implying a system without repercussions for willfully breaking laws is the right one. But what should be in place

is the ability to fix mistakes and stay in business without threat of perhaps multigenerational obliteration. I request that the punishment fits the crime and not the other way round.

I ask you to oppose both LD 881 and LD 882 today.

With Respect,

Arleigh A. Kraus