

Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
In Support of LD 939
An Act To Support Maine's Medical Marijuana Program and Ensure Patient Access

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Portland, ME

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Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo and members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

My name is Janelle LaPlante. I am a resident, registered cannabis caregiver assistant, and business owner in Portland. I am also a member of the Maine Craft Cannabis Association, a group committed to preserving Maine's craft cannabis industry. I am testifying today in support of LD 939 An Act to Support Maine's Medical Marijuana Program and Ensure Patient Access.

When the pandemic cut the last legislative session short, many common sense bills that could have improved Maine's medical cannabis program were left on the table. This legislative session, LD 939 addresses many of those same issues as well as others that have arisen throughout this pandemic. While I believe all changes to the Maine Medical Use of Marijuana Act addressed in this bill are worthy of an in depth testimony, I prefer to highlight my experience with a the current discrepancy between municipal cannabis ordinances and the current Maine Medical Use of Marijuana Act.

Since the passage of the Maine Adult Use of Marijuana Act, municipalities have created and adopted their own cannabis ordinances. In Portland, this is Chapter 35: Marijuana Businesses. In Chapter 35, a registered caregiver must chose a cultivation tier license. Each cultivation license mandates "to sell harvested, unprocessed marijuana, marijuana plants, or seedlings at wholesale" despite the Maine Office of Marijuana Policy stating "registered caregiver may transfer in wholesale transactions for reasonable compensation or for no remuneration up to 75% of the mature marijuana plants grown by the caregiver over the course of a calendar year."

Currently, Portland municipal ordinance and OMP state law do not match. This creates a predicament for many caregivers operating here. If the location the caregiver cultivates in, is not zoned for cultivation and retail, the caregiver must now find another location suitable for medical cannabis retail sales and obtain a retail license in order to comply with both state and local municipality regulations. This adds significantly more burden to any small business as it doesn't make financial sense to open another location to sell only 25% of their harvest. The liability placed on the caregiver due to conflicting local ordinances and state law could be eliminated with the passage of LD 939.

For this among many other reasons, I ask this committee to vote ought to pass on this bill. Thank you allowing me this time to share my experience and opinions on this matter.