

Joel Pepin
JAR Cannabis Co.

Rep. Caiazzo, Sen. Luchini and esteemed members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Joel Pepin and I am a resident of Standish. I am a 10 year operator of cannabis businesses and I am the co-founder of JAR Cannabis Co. a Maine vertically integrated cannabis business that operates in both the medical and adult use markets. I am also the President of the Maine Cannabis Industry Association. I would like to thank Rep. Perry for pushing this piece of legislation forward.

My name is Joel Pepin and I am support of LD 1434. When the current version of Maine's adult use marijuana law was drafted and finalized in the legislature in 2018 it was never the intent to make it law that adults 21 and over entering an adult use cannabis store would have to verify their ID OUTSIDE of a state licensed adult use marijuana store. The original intent was to allow adults to enter the front door of an adult use marijuana retail store, and have their identification and age verified in a vestibule by a trained staff member. There was an oversight in the process, in that in a different part of our adult use law it says 'No persons under the age of 21 may enter the premises'. The literal interpretation of this language contradicts the original intent to allow an adult to open the door and walk into the store into a secured and controlled entry area or security vestibule. Today, if you visit an adult use store the front door is typically locked and you may need to ring a door bell to alert a staff member that you're outside ready to have your ID checked. OR, an adult use marijuana store may have a staff member working outside the front door checking ID which simply isn't efficient, practical or safe when you factor in the elements and the secluded working conditions for that individual. Now that we are starting to see adult use retail stores open up in more populated areas like the City of Portland, the current law would force patrons to queue up outside of an adult use marijuana store on the sidewalk, blocking other businesses and creating unneeded congestion.

I believe this bill is one of the most important tweaks that should be made to the current adult use marijuana in Maine. It's no easy task to perfectly craft State law on a never before seen industry, and the original oversight this bill intends to fix is a great example of that.

I am in full support of this bill, and I ask you all to strongly consider supporting it as well. I am happy to answer any questions, and as always thank you for your consideration and service to our great State of Maine.

Joel Pepin