

*Senate of
Maine
Senate District 15*

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TESTIMONY OF SENATOR MATTHEW POULIOT

Sponsor of LD 1319

Public Hearing: April 23, 2021

An Act Regarding Registered Dispensaries and Rules under the Maine Medical Use of Marijuana Act and the Definition of "Resident" in the Marijuana Legalization Act.

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazza and esteemed members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee. I am Senator Matt Pouliot and I represent Senate District 15, which consist of the towns of Augusta, China, Oakland, Sidney and Vassalboro I am here today to present LD 1319 *An Act Regarding Registered Dispensaries and Rules under the Maine Medical Use of Marijuana Act and the Definition of "Resident" in the Marijuana Legalization Act*. This bill has two components and both are equally as important for Maine's Small Business Cannabis Caregivers.

First, this bill extends the sunset clause on issuing dispensary permits to residents. This is important, the residency sunset clause for dispensary permits was originally put in place to give Mainer's a shot at getting a dispensary permit before it was opened to out of state corporations. Those permits have not been given out, so it is vital that Mainer's continue to have an opportunity at those coveted permits before out of state interests can monopolize the dispensary permits in Maine. Giving Mainer's a shot is not just moral, it makes economic sense. When Mainer's own these businesses all of the money stays here. The profit created by the business is reinvested, and spent in the community. It's not whisked away to wall street or shareholders. We are elected to serve our constituents, and sometimes that means advocating for the local shops over corporations with endless capital.

The second part of this bill is a solution to a problem that has been identified by caregivers, patients, and legislators. Putting a moratorium on the current proposed rules by Office of Marijuana Policy (OMP) with the direction to complete an economic and patient access study will provide much needed data on some of the heavy-handed regulations set forth by this rules package. My understanding of the caregiver community is that they do not want their industry to be the wild west, but rather a thoughtfully regulated free market. OMP held a public hearing on the rule, my understanding is that the vast majority of those who attended were opposed- save for a couple lobbyists representing billion dollar companies who stand to gain market share if the mom and pop shops are pushed out. This rule making process should be collaborative, unique and representative of Mainers honesty, hard work and compassion for others. The current rules

create a feeling that these caregivers are guilty until they prove themselves innocent. That is not how our judicial system works, and it should not be how our regulatory system works.

This bill buys our small businesses time to have a fair dispensary permit process, and buys time to have a collaborative rule making process. I urge you to pass this bill as a prudent piece of legislation that provides data, and time to create the regulatory environment that Maine small businesses deserve.

Thank you for your time and I will entertain questions- though there maybe others after me who are better suited to answer them.