



To The Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs  
May 20, 2021

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### **LD 1589: OUGHT TO PASS**

My name is Mark Barnett. I am a resident of Auburn, Maine and own a medical cannabis retail store in Portland, Maine called Higher Grounds. I'm the Executive Chair of the Maine Craft Cannabis Association, a group of independent cannabis related business owners, farmers, entrepreneurs and enthusiasts focused on crafting sound cannabis policy and fostering an authentic craft cannabis industry in the state of Maine. We recommend that this Committee adopt the spirit of this bill's changes to the Marijuana Advisory Commission.

The MAC has been a largely ineffective body, and should meet more regularly to address the kinds of policy conflicts on display this session. These conversations have to take place at the last minute under the gun because there has been so little overarching analysis done of the state of the industry, the science, and of the functioning of the programs. In particular, the Office of Marijuana Policy is completely out of step with essentially the entire medical cannabis industry in Maine and that has created an extremely difficult environment in the Legislature to make constructive progress.

We feel this can be more easily addressed if the MAC is a more representative body and actually doing the oversight work it was created to do. We think it should be modeled on the Pesticide Control Board rather than be full of Legislators and bureaucrats with no experience with the work they're overseeing. We also believe it should include more than one patient, more than one physician, and more than one cultivator, processor, and retailer if it is supposed to be bringing relevant perspective to the table. Let's acknowledge the mistakes made in its formation with LD 1719 and move forward with folks who can engage deeply and seriously on the subject matter that is supposed to be its purview.

Sincerely,

Mark Barnett