



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Assistant House Majority Leader Rachel Talbot Ross presenting*  
**LD 1589, An Act To Ensure Equity in the Cannabis Industry**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs*

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, I am Rachel Talbot Ross. I represent House District 40 in Portland and serve as assistant House majority leader. I apologize that I cannot be with you today to present **LD 1589, An Act To Ensure Equity in the Cannabis Industry**.

I am presenting a proposed amendment, which is attached to this testimony, for your consideration. As you will see, the amendment would increase the membership of the Marijuana Advisory Commission from 15 to 21. It specifies the additional members should include a member of the public with an expertise in cultivation or manufacturing, a representative of a statewide association of defense attorneys, a representative of a statewide civil rights and racial justice organization, a qualifying patient, a Tribal member, and a representative of a civil liberties organization. Finally, it directs that appointments be made with an effort to represent our state's racial and gender diversity.

This proposed amendment brings forth the work that was done last year by this committee on then-LD 2091. Like so much of our work, that bill died when we adjourned early due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it had the unanimous support of this committee, and I hope you will join me in advancing it this session.

The intent is to ensure the membership of the Marijuana Advisory Commission is representative of the diversity of our state and acknowledges the historic and current dynamics of inequity and injustice surrounding cannabis in our state and nation.

I am grateful to Senator Craig Hickman for speaking to this proposal in more detail, as well as to the chairs and the committee as a whole for your time and attention to this proposal. Please feel welcome to contact me with any questions. I look forward to joining you for the work session.

**Sponsor's Proposed Amendment to LD 1586,  
An Act To Ensure Equity in the Cannabis Industry**

**Amend the title of the bill to read:**

An Act to Ensure Equity in the Membership of the Marijuana Advisory Commission

**Amend the bill by inserting after the title and before the enacting clause the following:**

**Sec. 7. 28-B MRSA §902, sub-§1**, as enacted by PL 2017, c. 409, Pt. A, §6, is amended to read:

**1. Membership.** The commission consists of the following ~~15~~ 21 members:

A. Two members of the Senate, including members from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature, appointed by the President of the Senate;

B. Two members of the House of Representatives, including members from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

C. The Commissioner of Administrative and Financial Services or the commissioner's designee;

D. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry or the commissioner's designee;

E. The Commissioner of Health and Human Services or the commissioner's designee;

F. The Commissioner of Labor or the commissioner's designee;

G. The Commissioner of Public Safety or the commissioner's designee;

H. The following ~~3~~ 6 members, appointed by the President of the Senate:

(1) A representative of a statewide association representing prosecutors;

(2) A representative of a statewide association representing the medical marijuana industry; ~~and~~

(3) A member of the public; ~~and~~

(4) A member of the public with demonstrated expertise in the cultivation of marijuana or the manufacturing of marijuana concentrate and marijuana products;

(5) A representative of a statewide association representing defense attorneys;  
and

**Sponsor's Proposed Amendment to LD 1586,  
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(6) A representative of a statewide civil rights organization with a primary mission to advance racial equity and racial justice; and

I. The following ~~3~~ 6 members, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives:

(1) A representative of a statewide association representing the adult use marijuana industry;

(2) A member of the public with demonstrated expertise and credentials in public health policy; ~~and~~

(3) A member of the public;

(4) A qualifying patient;

(5) A member of a federally recognized Indian tribe in the State; and

(6) A representative of the Maine chapter of a national civil liberties organization.

For all appointments under this subsection an effort must be made to represent the racial and gender diversity of the State of Maine.

**Sec. 8. 28-B MRSA §902, sub-§5**, as enacted by PL 2017, c. 409, Pt. A, §6, is amended to read:

**5. Quorum.** A quorum of the commission consists of ~~8~~ 11 members.

**SUMMARY**

This amendment changes the membership of the Marijuana Advisory Commission established under Title 28-B, section 901, increasing the number of members from 15 to 21 and specifies additional members representing certain interests.