

Ellen Thorne
Rumford
LD 104

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

My name is Ellen Thorne and I live in Rumford. I am a public health professional who has worked on various Substance Use Prevention programs in Maine for over a decade.

I'm testifying in favor of LD 1847 and LD 104, which would require testing and tracking in Maine's Medical Cannabis Program and prioritize efforts to reduce youth cannabis use.

Maine's Medical Cannabis Program lags far behind the national standard on safety and transparency. There are 30 states with medical cannabis programs and Maine is the only one that does not require testing for contaminants like heavy metals, pesticides, or mold. According to the 2023 Maine Office of Cannabis Policy's report Harmful Contaminants in Maine's Medical Cannabis Program, 42% of medical cannabis tested had at least one contaminant that would have failed testing in the Adult Use Cannabis Program.

This negligence is unfair to the 110,500 Mainers, including pediatric patients, who use medical cannabis.(1) Mainers who use medical cannabis to manage medical conditions deserve to have confidence that the products they're using are free from contaminants that could harm their health. There is no potency limit on edible products in the Medical Cannabis Program like there is for the Adult Use Program, which increases the risk of accidental overconsumption, in terms of potency, and associated side effects. Research shows that using higher potency cannabis can increase the risk of experiencing adverse impacts, including mental illnesses like depression and schizophrenia. That's especially true for adolescents whose brains are still developing.

I respectfully request you to vote LD 1847 and LD 104 "Ought to Pass" to help ensure transparency and safety in Maine's Medical Cannabis Program. It's long overdue. Thank you.

References

1. OCP, 2024 Annual Report