

## **Opposition Speech to LD 1320 – Cannabis-Related Convictions and Licensing**

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**Good afternoon, Chairs and members of the committee.**

**My name is [Your Name], and I rise today in firm opposition to LD 1320—specifically its provision to disqualify individuals from licensure due to prior cannabis-related convictions.**

**Let's be clear: this provision is not about public safety. It's about exclusion. It seeks to punish people twice—once through the justice system, and now again by denying them the opportunity to participate in a legal, regulated industry built on the very product for which they were once criminalized.**

**This is not just unfair—it is hypocritical.**

**We cannot in good conscience legalize cannabis, profit from it, and then turn around and say to those disproportionately harmed by prohibition, “You're not welcome here.”**

**If Maine truly wants a cannabis industry that is safe, fair, and locally driven, then we need to acknowledge the mistakes of prohibition—not replicate them in policy.**

**Let's look to Massachusetts as a leading example. Their Social Equity Program was created with a clear purpose: to ensure that those most harmed by the War on Drugs had a pathway into the legal cannabis industry. It offers training, licensing support, and priority access for individuals with prior cannabis convictions or from communities disproportionately impacted.**

**And it works. It's not just about fairness—it's about building a diverse, inclusive market that reflects the people it serves.**

**Massachusetts recognized that people with firsthand experience in cannabis—especially those harmed by outdated laws—have every right to participate in the new economy those laws created. They've turned a past conviction into a potential credential, not a permanent barrier.**

**Maine should do the same. We should be creating on-ramps, not roadblocks.**

**LD 1320 moves us backward. It penalizes people for surviving an era of injustice, while favoring those who had the privilege to wait for legalization.**

**I urge you: reject this provision. Create a program that welcomes those who were once targeted by prohibition—and let's build an industry that's not just legal, but equitable.**

**Thank you.**

