



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

1 August 2017

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 1641, "An Act To Amend the Marijuana Legalization Act Regarding Retail Marijuana Testing Facilities."

The introduction of adult-use marijuana in Maine presents unprecedented challenges. While we work to honor the will of the people, we must also confront the grave public health and safety consequences of legalizing a Schedule I drug.

Unlike this hastily assembled bill, the task will not be easy or quick. Instead, achieving a safe, sustainable program will require a thorough process, driven by the courage to make responsible decisions. Specifically, these decisions must reconcile the medical marijuana program with the new adult-use marketplace.

The passage of any statute allowing adult-use marijuana must be coupled with legislation to eliminate or reform the medical marijuana program. Maintaining two separate systems with inconsistent rules, enforcement and tax rates would create dueling markets, enable diversion of products and incentivize abuse of the medical program. This bill would perpetuate the division between the systems.

Chief among my other concerns with this particular bill are that it:

- Creates separate licensing bodies, resulting in dual oversight for the same business;
- Requires DHHS to certify labs for both adult-use and medical marijuana prior to licensing, but does not provide DHHS the right of inspection;
- Allows licensing with "provisional" accreditation; and
- Burdens DACF with too many mandates to be completed too soon after the recent passage of LD 243.

You've heard me call the 50 states "laboratories of democracy." We can learn from Colorado's experience. Governor Hickenlooper recently encouraged states to avoid the legal loopholes and bureaucratic redundancy that plagued his state's legal marijuana program.



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Governor Hickenlooper further warned of the “gray market” created by “such a looseness” in their rules. He spoke of folks legally growing marijuana under the medical caregiver and adult-use home grow models and diverting their products to the illicit market. We would be foolish to believe Maine will fare differently than Colorado.

In fact, the proliferation in the number of registered caregivers portends a shared fate unless we act on this issue. At the beginning of 2016, Maine had fewer than 2,300 registered caregivers. After the election, that number had skyrocketed to nearly 3,300.

For these reasons, I return LD 1641 unsigned and vetoed. I urge you to reflect on the lessons learned from other states, to make responsible decisions for the citizens of Maine and to sustain this veto.

Sincerely,



Paul R. LePage
Governor