

April 25, 2017

To: Honorable Co-chair Burdick and Lininger, Members of the committee.

From: Anthony Taylor, President
Compassionate Oregon

For the record my name is Anthony Taylor. I am the president of Compassionate Oregon. I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity and thank those members who were instrumental in the drafting of this legislation.

HB 2198 will reaffirm the states commitment to those Oregonians that find relief from debilitating conditions with cannabis. It reassures patients that the program will be there for them. It breathes life back into a program that has been looked to by other states wishing to add medical cannabis use to their laws. This bill is the future of the Medical Marijuana Program bringing a new approach, a new focus and new responsibilities.

Modernizing Oregon's Medical marijuana program shows our willingness to maintain a program that has helped thousands of Oregonians. It lets other states know too that Oregon is committed to its patients and will help protect them in a complicated landscape between industry and medicine and state versus federal control.

Under the new commission long term goals will be established to ensure cannabis remains a therapeutic option for Oregonians with debilitating conditions. It also ensures the continued affordability of patient cards and the continued viability of medical grow sites processors and dispensaries.

The requirement that the commission report back to the Legislature under HB 2198 is an important piece of this legislation and will prove valuable in developing evidence based policy for both patient and provider around the use of cannabis as medicine.

From patient access and the efficacy of the medicines in treating debilitating conditions to the status of the low-income patient programs and the needs of patients who are on parole or probation, it is important that we get started on these conversations. Dosing, contraindications and pain management, the role insurance will play in moving forward with cannabis as medicine and how federal laws affect state medical cannabis programs are all important issues to patients. This bill gives the commission the authority to proceed to work through these complex issues before they come before this body.

Tracking

HB 2198 recognizes the sensitive nature of this issue and proposes a soft roll-out with a sunrise and effective date that will give OMMP growers the time they will need to comply and the agencies the time to make the necessary adjustments to accommodate this new category of growers. It also recognizes and addresses the issue of market access for OMMP growers providing them limited access to the adult use market.

Perhaps no other issue facing the State's concerns about federal intervention looms larger than the fact that 80% of all the marijuana produced in this state is outside the adult use market and the only access they have to any legal market is through dispensaries whose numbers are dropping precipitously and those that remain are flooded with offers for product and even at reduced rates products move slowly.

Now that it appears everyone will be required to report into a single system, access, at least limited access to the adult use market, is necessary and warranted. HB 2198 does this by allowing OMMP growers to submit a limited amount through OLCC wholesalers and processors.

This is a good solution to a very big problem and deserves the committees attention.

Again we thank the committee for its work on this legislation and the opportunity to craft it in a manner that, if passed, provides assurance to patients that have been very worried that their program will be around for the foreseeable future.

Anthony Taylor