

## GREENWOOD HERBALS

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April 8, 2019

To: Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.

I am writing to show my support to the proposed LD-364 act to protect alternative healthcare practitioners, and my strong opposition to LD-1384 "An act relating to Complementary and Alternative Medicine Licensure".

My name is Debra Mercier, I am a clinical herbalist and instructor residing in Limerick, Maine. I have completed several years of training and education, I am President of the Maine Chapter of the American Herbalists Guild, and have been working with individuals and doctors for over 20 years. I teach students about plant uses, soil health, Identification, basic botany, land stewardship and preparations such as tea blending and developing body products. I also work with physicians from across the United States, providing support and awareness on the impact of Lyme, working in concert with their efforts and protocols, as well as educating them on plant constituents and properties that help support peoples health.

From the receiving side of this, my family and I have actively pursued care from complementary/alternative healthcare practices. I believe it is our sovereign right to choose methods of treatment that suit our beliefs and our bodies. We are not all the same, so these options are out there to help us become healthier and develop awareness of our own person by addressing our individual needs. By utilizing these alternative practitioners, through exercising our right to free choice, we have addressed and resolved our own health concerns. To force this wide array of services and people into a narrow-scoped licensing act is dysfunctional at best.

I believe in a market where free educated choices are available, and a state where those people practicing are protected.

I am Maine, through and through. It's a VERY Maine value to allow citizens to choose what is best for themselves without invasive Laws that interfere with the individuals autonomy. As practitioners I am saddened that we are in a situation like this, where these practices pose no threat to the general public, but instead are under attack. We have a vibrant business community throughout the state that would be decimated if this wide array of practices was banished and availability denied to its citizens.

The Declaration of Independence sums it up best:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by *their creator* with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.."

Respectfully yours,

Debra Mercier

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