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Senator Susan Deschambault
Representative Charlotte Warren
Committee on Criminal Justice & Public Safety
100 State House Station Room 436
Augusta, ME 04330

RE: LD 967 An Act To Make Possession Scheduled Drugs for Personal Use a Civil Penalty

Dear Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee:

MACDL supports LD 967.

Decriminalizing possession of scheduled drugs means that individuals will no longer be arrested or incarcerated merely for possessing or using a drug. This will result in less people incarcerated and less people involved in the criminal justice system. This is a good thing.

Drug possession convictions and incarceration can have short term and life long consequences. Individuals with drug convictions are likely to suffer negatively at work, in their relationships, and in their housing.

Drug possession convictions have a disproportionate impact on the poor and people of color; making drug possession a civil offense will help to alleviate these disparities.

LD 967 does not legalize the possession of drugs. Possession of drugs will still be prohibited under the law, but the prohibition on possession of drugs will be moved from a criminal penalty to a civil penalty.

The get tough on crime, war on drugs approach has been a failure by any metric. It has cost untold amounts of dollars and lives. It is time for comprehensive reform of the way we charge and prosecute drug related offenses. LD 967 is a good first step.

MACDL hopes this Committee will support LD 967 with an ought to pass recommendation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jeremy Pratt
Vice-President, MACDL