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Good Morning Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

My name is Leslie Clark, and I am speaking today as Executive Director of Portland Recovery Community Center (PRCC), and as a person in long-term recovery from substance use disorder (SUD). I am speaking in opposition of LD109.

For the last ten years, PRCC has provided a safe haven for those in or seeking recovery. A significant percentage of our members and volunteers currently live in a recovery residence or at one point in their recovery journey resided in one. Recovery residences uniquely provide a safe and supportive living environment that is conducive to strengthening their residents' recovery. Current law allows recovery residences to be classified as single-family homes for the purposes of fire codes if they meet certain criteria. If current law is repealed with the passage of LD 109, many recovery residences could be required to install sprinkler systems with an estimated cost of \$20,000-\$40,000. Recovery residences across Maine may close being unable to afford such costly installations. At a time of such great need Maine would be going backwards with the passage of LD 109. In recent years, collaborative efforts have grown the number of safe, quality recovery residences that are a critical component of recovery support services.

Last year, 650 Mainers lost their lives to a fatal overdose between January - November 2022. Overdose deaths in 2022 outpaced those in 2021, and that is true without even having data available yet from December 2022.



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Furthermore, according to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, homelessness in Maine increased by two-thirds between 2021 and 2022. As overdose deaths continue to rise and Maine is in the middle of a housing crisis, we urge our legislators to vote against LD 109. Our community cannot afford to lose a single bed in recovery residences.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition of LD 109 and would be pleased to answer any questions that the Committee may have at this time.