

Testimony on
L.D. 109, “*An Act to Improve the Safety for Individuals Living in Recovery Residences*”

Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Monday, January 30, 2023

Good Afternoon, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Lisa Sockabasin and I am a citizen of the Passamaquoddy Tribe. I am submitting written testimony today as a member of the public. I am in strong opposition to L.D. 109 An Act to Improve the Safety of Individuals Living in Recovery Residences. I currently work in the public health, wellness, and recovery field as the co-CEO of Wabanaki Public Health & Wellness (WPHW). An organization that has grown quickly, urgently trying to meet the recovery and healing needs within our communities and tribal Nations.

Our country and state remain in crisis. It is a crisis felt by many and a crisis that will take all of us to solve. For those of us working in the healing and recovery fields, we know the hours we spend supporting people who are ready to heal and serving those who have not yet found their way. We work in this field because of the love and protection we hold for all those suffering from substance use disorder and trauma. And while I appreciate L.D. 109’s name, and hopefully the intention of this bill, it does exactly the opposite of its words “to improve safety”. The hundreds of people who find safety and wellness within the existing recovery homes in Maine today are at risk. Safe, supportive, family style housing has offered many of our tribal community members and others the lifesaving housing supports necessary for comprehensive humane healing. I ask you to oppose L.D. 109, a bill that will negatively impact many lives today desperately trying to heal.

The organization I help to lead has experience in licensing, developing healing centers, and recovery housing. We have recently installed a sprinkler system for a building that will be used for a service that requires sprinklers, medication withdrawal services. The installation process was long and expensive. Our recent installation costing more than \$165,000, a price tag unattainable for many nonprofits and recovery residence owners. The time and resources needed for sprinkler installation, in homes that have already been deemed family homes, is not improving safety, it is reckless. People are healing in these homes, people are finding safety in these homes, people are experiencing healing in these homes. Please keep this healing going.

Distinguished members of this committee, thank you for your time and I hope you will join me and all the others here today in opposing L.D. 109. This work, critical to the success of the State of Maine overall.

In partnership and with gratitude,
Lisa Sockabasin
Passamaquoddy Citizen

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