

Athena Witham
Savida Health
LD 109

Dear Senator Anne Beebe, Representative Suzanne Salisbur, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety;

My name is Athena. I am a University of Maine graduate social work student interning with SaVida Health. I am writing today to provide testimony opposing this bill.

Working with individuals affected by substance use disorder, I have seen how Recovery Residences play a critical role in supporting people after incarceration and addressing Maine's increasing number of people living outside and overdose fatalities. Affordable housing options that support recovery- like recovery residences are paramount in recovery and preventing fatal drug-related deaths that continue to take people who are our family, friends, and neighbors in Maine.

Across the state, there is a shortage of affordable housing, including recovery residences. LD 109: An Act to Improve Safety for Individuals Living in Recovery Residences is a harmful barrier disguised with a misleading name that risks closure to existing recovery residences. LD 109 disproportionality harms a targeted population and is tone-deaf to the efforts across the state to prevent substance use disorder-related deaths and increase services and infrastructure that support the recovery community.

I urge the members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety committee to vote ought not to pass on LD 109.

Athena Witham