

Honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee and the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee

My name is Mikki Rice and I live in Freeman Twp. I am testifying in opposition LD 258 the Governor's Biennial Budget. I do not believe that we should be allocating over \$200 million in criminalizing and prosecuting people for mental illness and Substance Use when we know that it doesn't work.

We are spending nearly a half a billion dollars on criminalization at a time when overdose rates just continue to increase every year over SEVEN HUNDRED last year in Maine. That's sickening. People can't get into treatment when they need it yet we can continue to spend exorbitant amounts on criminalizing those same people who need help.

We live in a very rural state and not many harm reduction programs that get people the safer use supplies they need and train people on how to use naloxone and safer use practices. We have very few treatment beds in the state that take mainecare and in many places in Maine the closest Opioid treatment program that offers all types of MAT is hours away. Forget trying to get in-patient treatment unless you are severely addicted to alcohol or benzodiazepine or are suicidal.

We need to be investing in treatment, harm reduction, and community supports not the criminal legal system.

I oppose the Governor's Biennial Budget and urge you to divest from punitive measures and invest in the community.

Mikki Rice
Freeman Twp.