

**Testimony in Favor of LD 1159 An Act to Establish a
Pilot Project Regarding Harm Reduction Health Centers**

April 7, 2023

Dear Representative Osher, Senator Beebe-Center and Representatives Abdi, Boyer, Crafts, Dhalac, LaRochelle, Riseman, Roeder and Sayre and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Amanda Taisey and I am a citizen of Buxton and I care deeply about this bill as I have worked in the recovery, treatment and domestic violence advocacy world in Maine for roughly twenty years and have personally said goodbye to too many friends and family as a result of overdose. I am in favor of this bill because when I started in this field we were seeing dozens of Maine community members die annually and now we are sadly witnessing HUNDREDS die annually and we HAVE to do something different. Other states and countries utilize these models with great success and there is no reason that we cannot at least TRY something new here in Maine.

Harm Reduction services have a long history in Maine and there is no other way to say it other than they save lives. And in doing so, they offer compassion and dignity to those utilizing the services. There are plenty more community members who can share more specific details on the offerings of these sites but having researched and advocated for harm reduction efforts and services my entire professional career, I can say for certain that it is beyond time to give Mainers what they desperately need and deserve: a space to feel cared for and not judged for their choices and opportunity to thrive in their communities..

I implore you to pass this bill because we are beyond heartbroken everytime we hear of another person needlessly lost due to policy failures of the State. We need your support more than ever so please pass LD 1159, "An Act to Establish a Pilot Project Regarding Harm Reduction Health Centers".

Sincerely,

Amanda Taisey

Buxton, Maine