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LD 1159

Good afternoon representatives, I know it's been a long day for all of you, but I am going to ask that you look up from what you're doing, and give me your attention and the time I've prepared for. I'm Sarah Manfredo-Daley, and I'm a person in recovery from addiction. A person who, by the grace of God, survived the worst phase of my existence. In recovery, we learn to ask for what we need from others, face our fears instead of running from them, and to deal with our problems head on and with grace and dignity. I'm here to testify in support of LD 1159 because in my opinion, it's really simple. If we are not facing our fears and dealing with our problems head on at the state level, extending that same grace and dignity, how can we expect anyone else to do it? Maine historically is very reactive with legislation, waiting for a crisis to happen before we act, rather than acting proactively at the first sign of a problem. It's a little late for us to be proactive with the addiction crisis, but how long are we willing to wait to react? Right now is the time for our reaction. Overdose prevention sites save lives. No one has ever died of an overdose at any of the 130 harm reduction or overdose prevention sites all over the world. Not one. Every overdose where the drug user survives is a success story. It gives that individual another day to live and love, another day is a new opportunity to wake up and make a different choice. A better choice. A smarter choice. Another opportunity to see how loved they are. Another opportunity to make a change and start showing up as their best selves. If we save one life, the bill has done its job. Saving lives or continuing to allow the stigmatization of addicted people to send the message that our lives do not matter? Everyone's life matters to someone. The addicts I speak of and whom are losing their battles with addiction every day, are someone's children, someone's parents, someone's brother or sister, someone's best friend, or maybe someone's only confidant or support person. To someone, that person matters more than any of us could imagine. What if it was your child? Would their life matter then? Every overdose is a policy failure. What else do we really need to know? In recovery, we learn that the opposite of addiction is connection, let that connection start here and now. Let's send the message that addicts are worth saving, that their lives matter, that they are loved and cared about by passing LD1159. For me, the choice is simple, we either save lives or we sit back and be okay with people dying. I don't know about you, but I'm never okay with people dying, under any circumstances.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony today, and thank you for giving me your time and attention. I appreciate you all.