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Hello Honorable elected officials,

My friends and I founded the Church of Safe Injection with the desire to use "religious exemption" to offer overdose prevention center services to the public in Maine and beyond, a tremendous amount of people were and still are dying and unfortunately eventually both prior COSI leaders passed themselves from lethal overdose, and we lost Jesse and Kari. Both of them did incredibly positive things with their recoveries, and worked incredibly hard for the betterment of your state, and I write to you on their behalf now, as one of two surviving founding members of COSI.

The services being provided in NY, which is our only current US example of the facilities we are proposing are working and saving lives. Over 850 people have been resuscitated at On Point now. Staff from On Point testified in CT to my states Public Health Committee that every person utilizing the safer consumption services in NY has gone on to try the no wait detox beds, or MAT referrals offered at this real life US based overdose prevention center. Such wrap around services are vital because you can help patients transition from safer usage services towards detox or MAT, depending on what path they want to try. By building trusting relationships NY providers have shown that just like in the international facilities, US based overdose prevention centers are similarly working successfully when it comes to getting patients off illicit drugs, not just with mitigation of deaths on premise in the short term. The detractors have been wrong about NY, and I am thrilled that patients are utilizing their connections to seek further care, that is why the facilities are so successful historically. You slowly win proverbial hearts and minds and you can help people once you have their trust and a connection through the outreach services. Outreach services are a building block towards MAT, detox, and other pathways, but even safer use is better than death, better than HIV, HEP C, lethal heart infections, and the myriad of issues patients face without successful safer use services. These burdens are eventually faced by taxpayers too, harm reduction services save both lives AND money is the other part to focus on.

In time as facilities like these build these relationships, you will gradually see more and more people trying other paths. But that does not mean that safer use does not have merit either, you are saving lives, preventing virus transmission, lethal heart infections, all kinds of expensive conditions that the taxpayers then have to pay on top of extensive unnecessary human suffering. Safer use is essentially identical to your existing services outside of on site consumption, but that's the key part, health professionals have lost zero lives in NY and internationally in these facilities, and that's because outreach professionals are able to render care in time successfully.

People are unfortunately going to continue to use substances whether we offer these services or not, but significantly less people have to die or catch a horrible related illness if we implement these services.

We founded it as a Church because we have the sincere desire to help people, to save lives and preach every life is worth saving. We believe this, as deeply as any other religious person believes anything in the United States, we believe in stopping these preventable deaths, we believe in offering those struggling compassion, we believe that people do not have to die. We have lost a tremendous amount of lives, and these facilities alongside wider Naloxone distribution offer a real hope to reduce loss of life in the future, God is very much in our hearts and in our minds when we push for these facilities, because he would not want people to suffer needlessly when we have the regulated meds, the clean needles, the Narcan, the loved ones who don't want to lose their family and friends to this anymore, and we are going to change it, and stop these

deaths nationally. Purdue Pharma did horrible actions here in my hometown, and God knows we fought to stop them as hard as we possibly could, whether we ever get the indictments we deserve for these corporate drug dealers or not. I am deeply, truly sorry for what this morally bankrupt firm did to your state and others. I am sorry that my community never stopped it in time, and that even now the criminal masterminds stand to walk with tens of billions. Our loved ones died or were prosecuted for the chemical dependency they didn't ask for as part of a sophisticated kickback scheme. For far too long, as Richard Sackler so put it, the victims of this have been "hammered".

I am sick of seeing my loved ones blamed, victim shamed, and eventually dying without services by a cruel society ignoring the real problems Purdue Pharma and other firms perpetuated at the start of the first wave of our recent contemporary crisis. These centers offer a real chance at saving lives, both short term with Naloxone use, and longer term in building trusting patient relationships to guide patients towards detox or medically assisted treatment. I could not save my friends, but I and many others have continued to try to save others, strangers, anyone we can. We will not give up on these victims, they never asked for the terrible destruction wrought upon them. They didn't have criminal intent with fraudulent meds and faked efficacy data like Purdue did. They didn't have the capacity to make educated medical decisions as victims of an elaborate kickback scheme.

You can save lives if you find the political courage to fight for these overdose prevention centers. In life my friend founded three recovery houses in your state, in death I hope you found your first overdose prevention centers because of him and his friend Kari. Both Jesse and Kari tried incredibly hard to save lives in your state, and many were saved by them even when so tragically they could not save themselves. These lives are worth saving, the people struggling are good people, they didn't deserve what happened to them. We can still save lives, we can still accomplish the dream my friends had. It is not too late to save others, to triage this horrible situation. I have seen the best and worst in humankind in this political fight, I have lost more lives than you can possibly understand. I am sick of losing lives as I write this to you in tears. Please, I plead with you to allow us to save anyone we still can. God is with us on overdose prevention centers, he wants us to finish this Church, and to save as many people as we can, I know this in my heart. He wants us to help the people everyone else has given up on, and we are going to listen to God on this one. We are going to save as many people as we possibly can