

**Testimony in Favor of LD 1714:
An Act to Create a Sustainable Funding Source for Recovery Community Centers**

Committee on Taxation
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Julie Burnham-Leavitt, LADC, CCS
Oakland, ME 04963
RE: LD 1714

May 3, 2023

Dear Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation,

My name is Julie Burnham-Leavitt, I am a resident of Oakland and I work as a Substance Use Disorder Counselor in Skowhegan. I have seen the impact substances have on my community and the struggle that people who use substances endure every day. I am speaking to you today in favor of passing LD 1714.

When my 14-month-old grandson died on November 2, 2021, due to the combined effects of Fentanyl and Tramadol, I knew I had to do something to create change in my community. There is a lack of connection and communication among community members and organizations. We need more programs and services for individuals that feel stuck in the drug world. The addition of Recovery Community Centers in each town would make all the difference.

Recovery Community Centers increase the positive outcome for individuals striving to create a life that makes it easier for them not to use substances. Individuals that I have worked with frequently share stories of making connections with others that are in recovery. The stories I hear tell of the impact connections have in their lives and the hope created to keep going and not only survive but thrive. These are the type of connections we want to pass on to youth in our communities.

It is our job as the surviving members of our communities to advocate for more recovery resources to prevent further deaths. The more resources we have, the more families of people who use substances can learn about and get involved with recovery efforts. The more we invest in recovery for our Maine communities, the more recovery will be within reach for those that feel it is so far away.

LD 1714 will provide Maine Recovery Community Centers with a sustainable funding stream for many years. This bill will allow recovery centers to be staffed properly and provide the resources needed for individuals struggling to maintain their recovery. The services provided by recovery centers have proven to increase the likelihood of maintaining long-term recovery from substance use disorders. I strongly urge the committee to pass LD 1714 to ensure that all Recovery Community Centers in Maine have the resources necessary to support individuals with substance use disorder.

Sincerely,

Julie Burnham-Leavitt, LADC, CCS