

**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

Georgia Underwood  
151 Willimantic RD  
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Re: LD 1714

May 9, 2023

Dear Senator King, Senator Collins, Senator Golden, Representative Guerin and White, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation,

My name is Georgia Underwood, and I am a Piscataquis County, Town of Monson. I am also a person in long-term recovery from alcoholism. What that means to me is that I have not drunk alcohol since December 2008 and I am speaking to you today in favor of passing LD 1714.

My substance use began around 12, I feel I have a typical SUD story, a generational story of alcoholism in the family, my sisters tried to help raise me, and my mother tried her best. I was displaced and homeless (couch surfing). I always had worked so, I tended to have money,. I score high on childhood ACEs for some reason I have been very resilient in most matters of life. I did graduate from High School and have been able to keep jobs, however, my depression and anxiety, and PTSD plus desire to drink alcohol, lack of coping skills have taken me from high functioning to not functioning at all at times.

When I got sober I needed treatment and went to Acadia Hospital in Bangor for Mental Health Issues as well as Substance Use Disorder soon after I returned home, I started drinking again, (Always remember People, Places, and Things) are triggers with people with Addictions. Eventually, I stopped drinking and found the closest AA meeting I could find. My depression and anxiety were out of control and I knew I had to do something. Getting Sober was the easy part staying sober was the hardest, I found my community in AA and traveled far and wide for meetings. Plus, I was lucky enough to have a car and was able to attend Recovery Center in Bangor (BARN) or at least get a ride with others to meetings. I have seriously worked hard to keep myself Sober, every day is a new day and I can have all the chaos, drama, and dark depression back anytime I want. Most important if I did not build a community for myself with my recovery friends, I am not sure I would have made it.

This is what I did as a recovering person, finished my degree and received a Bachelors's. I did get a job at a nonprofit and started working in the field of social services. I bought a house. I was able to feed, house and clothe my two daughters and have them complete high school and attend college. There were certainly hard times and I couldn't imagine though I could have never done these things without being sober, my life would have been mediocre at its best. I built a foundation through Recovery and found a reason to give back.

I often wonder if my Recovery would have moved quicker or felt more communal, not shameful if there was a place for me to connect with others during my recovery. The fellowship is great and I have built a strong foundation however sometimes you got to leave the rooms and deal with life, especially with work and family. I could have learned more coping skills, vocational skills and social skills. I could have had some practice. This may have helped my anxiety and eased my nerves some. I consider myself very lucky

By the Grace of God, that I had the recovery and now I can say I have a bigger recovery family. I can enter any recovery center in this State and feel right at home.

The more we invest in recovery resources, the fewer funerals myself and the community attends. LD 1714 will provide Maine RCCs with a sustainable funding stream for years to come. This bill will allow RCCs to be properly staffed and provide the services that have been proven to increase the chances of sustained remission from SUD. I urge this committee to pass LD 1714 and ensure that every RCC in Maine has the resources necessary to support people with SUD.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,  
Georgia Underwood  
Monson ME