

**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

Patrick Reny
Lisbon Falls, ME 04252

Re: LD 1714

May 6, 2023

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

My name is Patrick Reny and until recently I was a member of Portland's rich sober living community. I am in early recovery which I can say, more confidently than ever, that I have accepted as my new way of life. Most "sober" people would consider early recovery as under a year without abusing an addictive substance. I have just over six months, which is the longest period in my life away from drugs since I started using twenty-three years ago. I write this testimony in support of LD 1714.

I have tried countless times to quit drugs and alcohol over the past decade. However, there were key ingredients missing. A common theme that those of us afflicted by the disease of addiction experience is a lack of a sense of belonging. Without feeling like I belonged or fit in, I turned to substances in hopes that it would help. For a while it helped me cope with my feelings of isolation, until it no longer did.

While in Portland, it was suggested by those with long standing sobriety that I get involved in the community and begin to help others. More specifically to help others who struggle with substance use disorder. Portland Recovery Community Center (PRCC) was the first destination on my list, as I was new to the area and didn't know what else to do. I was welcomed with open arms and even though my reflex was to be distrusting, I soon realized that the people there genuinely wanted to help me. They wanted to help me by helping me help others. I was beginning to feel a sense of belonging and purpose.

There were many people in early recovery who were volunteering, and there were people willing to mentor and push me to get involved no matter how unnatural it felt to me. As I volunteered, helped with taking calls, and connected with other people in recovery, one thing became clear very to me. What PRCC provides is community and access to a plethora of ways to engage in recovery no matter your background or where you come from. We host a variety of recovery meetings, have recovery coaches, provide telephone recovery support, and we also host fun events such as potlucks and karaoke. As long as you are willing, you will be supported as I am.

It is of the utmost importance to fund recovery centers. Many RCCs in Maine are underfunded. I am from the Lewiston area and I hadn't heard of a recovery center in all my years of using there. Funding is necessary for an RCC's capacity for outreach, staffing, and providing services and information for those who want to recover from addiction. It is also a place for loved ones of those with SUD to find

information and advice from those who have been there. To me there isn't an argument that could deter me from backing LD 1714, as PRCC has been a cornerstone of my recovery and many others.

Thank you for listening,

Patrick Reny