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May 10th, 2023

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

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

My name is Robert Fickett and I am the Executive Director of the Bangor Area Recovery Network, a Bangor resident, and a person in long term recovery from substance use disorder. I am here today to give testimony in support of LD 1714 on behalf of myself, the organization I lead, and the recovery community that calls the Bangor Area Recovery Network its home.

Substance use disorder is a complex, chronic, and devastating disease that affects millions of Americans each year. Across Maine we have witnessed the relentless toll this disease inflicts in our communities. It tears families apart, displaces people from their homes and jobs, and claims the lives of our friends, family members, and neighbors. But I am not here to speak to you of the obvious negative impacts of substance use disorder. I am here to speak to you of the hope and courage that lives in the hearts of thousands of recovering individuals across Maine that have broken those bonds of demoralization to find a new life of freedom in recovery. Thousands of individuals who find their support, comfort, safety, and connection in the rooms of recovery community centers.

Recovery community centers across Maine offer a safe and supportive environment for those in recovery, providing resources and services such as recovery coaching, education, job training, pro-social events, and support meetings. These centers also offer a range of services to family members and loved ones as well as providing opportunities for civic engagement and advocacy in the community. Recovery community centers are a vital part of the comprehensive continuum of care for the treatment of substance use disorders and play an important role in our public health system.

We cannot afford to allow the financial sustainability of these centers to be neglected or face the uncertainty of depending on funding sources that may not be there next year or the year after that. This is why I urge you to pass LD 1714, to ensure that the extraordinary work at these centers can continue and that individuals, myself included, can continue to find purpose, connection, love, and transformation at their recovery community center.

Respectfully,

Robert Fickett
Executive Director
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