

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation: my name is Patricia Kidder and I am a resident of Springvale, part of the city of Sanford. I am writing you today (May 10th, 2023) to testify in favor of LD 1714: An Act To Create a Sustainable Funding Source for Recovery Community Centers Using a Percentage of the Adult Use Cannabis Tax Revenue.

I am a long time member of the Maine People's Alliance (MPA) and even though I am writing to you personally, I know that MPA, with more than 32,000 members across our state, is standing right beside me on this issue.

We all know someone with Substance Use Disorder (SUD) or are suffering with it ourselves. We know that SUD can happen to anyone. It doesn't discriminate who it infects. We know that it is a tough medical condition to treat and that it can and usually does take many tries before attaining a sustainable recovery. My friends on MAT or Medication Assisted Treatment who can't take suboxone and need Methadone instead, have to drive an hour to the clinic to get their medication. There's so many obstacles and hurdles on anyone's journey to a sustainable recovery that we should do whatever we can to make it easier and give them a higher success rate.

Substance Use Disorder is truly a medical condition or disease and we need to treat it as such. SUD is just one of the many manifestations of Obsessive Compulsive Behavior Disorder (OCBD) and the people who suffer with it need access to many ongoing forms of treatment to sustain long term recovery. It has been shown that peer support and communities are very important components of their long term treatment plan. No one will ever understand more about what someone goes through with SUD, than somebody else who has Substance Use Disorder and is on their Recovery Journey. These relationships are crucial for a successful long term recovery for many suffering with SUD.

These essential nonclinical peer to peer services are available through Recovery Community Centers across Maine. They have shown to help people maintain their

long term recovery, improve their quality of life, the lives of the people who love them and the communities where they live. We currently have 19 Recovery Community Centers or RCCs in Maine but many have minimal funding and can't provide the essential services required for successful long term recovery. A quarter of our RCCs received less than 20% of the funds predicted to be needed to operate fully for one year.

Our friends, family members, and neighbors need all of Maine's Recovery Community Centers to be fully functioning to support our loved ones with SUD. Our communities and state need the centers to provide peer to peer support for all who seek it to sustain their long term recovery. The only way to make this happen is to find an ongoing funding source that can keep up with the high cost of the much needed centers. LD 1714: An Act To Create a Sustainable Funding Source for Recovery Community Centers Using a Percentage of the Adult Use Cannabis Tax Revenue will accomplish that goal.

Allocating 12% of the adult use cannabis tax revenue every year would provide the ongoing funding required to make all of our Recovery Community Centers fully functioning and able to expand into more rural communities. This bill will not take any funds from the Adult Use Cannabis Public Health and Safety and Municipal Opt-In Fund, which pays for prevention efforts and law enforcement education. LD 1714 takes advantage of the relatively new state revenue source, adult use cannabis tax, by setting aside 12% of it to provide the ongoing funding needed for our RCCs to fully function.

We know it is going to take more action to get our current SUD epidemic under control and that it has been decades in the making. We know it will take easy access to low-barrier housing and recovery services first to start someone's recovery journey and the peer to peer recovery services provided through our Recovery Community Centers is crucial for their long term recovery. And we know the positive ripple effect a loved ones long term recovery has on themselves and everyone around them for generations to come. RCCs may be only one of our tools that we can use to combat the SUD

epidemic but it is one of the best ways we know really works to help people sustain their long term recovery.

You have the power to really make a difference in the lives of people suffering with Substance Use Disorder and the people who love them. You have the power to provide ongoing funding for a state wide program that has shown its effectiveness in assisting SUD sufferers by supporting their long term recovery. It is only by supporting people's long term recovery efforts that we can reduce the number of relapses and therefore the overdose rates. You have the power to save people's lives and dramatically improve the lives of all of us. I am asking you to please vote in support of LD 1714: An Act To Create a Sustainable Funding Source for Recovery Community Centers Using a Percentage of the Adult Use Cannabis Tax Revenue and help us fight back against the SUD epidemic that has spread across the entire state.

Thank you for your time and your service.

Sincerely,

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