



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Representative Laurie Osher supporting*  
**LD 1781, An Act to Establish the Homeless Substance Use Disorder  
Service Program**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee, I am Laurie Osher and I represent District 25, the majority of Orono. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for **LD 1781, An Act to Establish the Homeless Substance Use Disorder Service Program**. Thank you to Representative Drew Gattine for bringing this proposal forward.

LD 1781 would continue and expand on a successful pilot project, the Homeless Opioid Users Service Engagement (HOUSE) Project. The pilot has served 49 people, connecting them with medication-assisted treatment and medical care, including mental health care.

The pilot has also connected 27 of the participants with housing. This is particularly important, because we know that stable housing plays an important role in people's ability to access and follow through with treatment. When an individual is experiencing homelessness, especially long-term homelessness, it presents unique challenges to recovery.

The HOUSE Project has brought a new approach to providing services, and it has proven it can work to help unhoused Mainers who are struggling with substance use disorder. It is exactly the kind of innovative approach we need if we are going to save lives, and we simply must act: Mainers are dying every day. In 2022, we lost almost two people a day, on average, to preventable overdoses.

I ask the committee to please support LD 1781. Please feel welcome to contact me with any questions you may have for me.