

Testimony in Support of LD 1975
“An Act to Implement a Statewide Public Health Response to Substance Use and
Amend the Laws Governing Scheduled Drugs”

Good morning Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Scott Harriman, I live in Lewiston, and I am testifying in support of LD 1975, “An Act to Implement a Statewide Public Health Response to Substance Use and Amend the Laws Governing Scheduled Drugs.”

Maine is experiencing an epidemic fueled by drugs, with hundreds of our family members, friends, and neighbors dying every year of accidental overdoses. For the last 50 years we’ve put all our resources into a law enforcement response, and the predominant result has been an ever-increasing amount of taxpayer dollars being spent on arresting, prosecuting, and incarcerating people who have a legitimate, diagnosable illness – substance use disorder.

We must shift our focus toward treating this problem as what it is: a public health crisis.

This bill would establish receiving centers across the entire state to help the thousands and thousands of Mainers who are seeking treatment for substance use disorder but who do not currently have access due to location or capacity constraints.

In the time that I’ve spent interacting with people in recovery, one thing that keeps coming up is that someone who is ready to get treatment needs to be able to access it quickly. Waiting weeks or months for a spot to become available only multiplies their chances of dying from this disease.

Too many Maine families have had to deal with the aftermath of our failed policies by navigating the painful experience of losing their loved ones. Let’s shift our approach to one that will save both resources and, most importantly, people’s lives.

Please vote **Ought To Pass** on LD 1975. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Scott A. Harriman (he/him)
Lewiston, Maine
harriman.scott@gmail.com