

Testimony in Support of Funding LD 1714

February 22, 2024

Good Afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and Members of the Appropriations Committee and Members of the Taxation Committee,

My name is Justin Judkins, and I am a person in long-term recovery from SUD. I am writing this testimony today to urge you to prioritize funding for LD 1714.

The opioid epidemic has brought un-imaginable pain and tragedy to many people in this state, the costs are beyond our ability to measure. Mainers have been suffering the costs, pain, heartache, and despair for many years with little to no relief. As the population grows and the strength of drugs increases, any action we take to provide support & resources for the people affected is of vital importance.

Many recovery community centers are operating on severely limited budgets. LD 1714 creates a continued pathway of funding for recovery community centers (RCCs) through reinvested cannabis tax dollars. This would enable RCCs to focus on providing resources and support that Mainers desperately need.

I found the recovery community center in Portland in the summer of 2022, early into my recovery journey. I pulled into the parking lot extremely nervous and full of fear, took a deep breath and walked into the center. I was immediately welcomed and felt like I was a part of this family I had never met. I began attending groups, speaking with staff and volunteers about my experiences and troubles, volunteering, and becoming part of a community. This center's value in my own recovery journey is priceless. It helped me to find my self-worth, to walk through fear, to recover from addiction, and to become the person I always wanted to be and thought I had lost. In the time since I first walked in, I began working as Peer Support at the center, and have recently been hired as the Volunteer Coordinator. Working at the same center which helped me recover allows me the opportunity to support others in all stages of their personal recovery journeys.

Recovery is so valuable and the people in these communities are amazing. Addiction doesn't discriminate and neither does recovery. People in recovery should have access to the resources and support that will help them overcome addiction and become the people they strive to be. By funding LD 1714, you can ensure that Maine has given their citizens the best chance possible to heal and recover from this epidemic.

I thank you for your time and consideration,

Justin Judkins
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