

## 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 Han Ferguson. I identify as an ally and family member of people in recovery from (and actively struggling with) SUD, as well as a person in recovery from mental health challenges and process addictions. 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 country. I have lived in Oregon, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine. In each state, I have witnessed and experienced the costs, pain, heartache, and despair of this struggle. The need for support grows along with the population and the strength of drugs. Any action we take to provide 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 2023, in my first few weeks as a new Mainer. I was looking on the Maine Association of Nonprofits website for organizations I could connect to that are making a difference in this area. I was immediately welcomed and felt like I was a part of this family I had never met. Centers like this are a priceless resource I so wish people in my life growing up had been able to access. In the time since I first walked in, I began working as the Volunteer Coordinator at the center, and have recently been moved into the outreach position for the World Recovery Café program. Working at the same center which is helping me prioritize self-care and recovery 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.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Han Ferguson  
World Recovery Café Outreach Coordinator  
Portland Recovery Community Center  
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LD 2214

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