



Testimony on LD 209

Good Afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services and Appropriations Committees,

My name is Tess Parks. I am the Policy Director of the Maine Recovery Action Project (ME-RAP), a grassroots network of Mainers working on community and public policy based solutions to substance use. I am here today to testify on behalf of Courtney Gary-Allen, our Executive Director, and our statewide network of people in recovery from substance use.

While we acknowledge the complexities of balancing spending priorities with limited funding, we are here to oppose two provisions in the proposed supplement budget, which are the removal of funding for the Kennebec County Crisis Receiving Center and the reductions in General Assistance eligibility. These cuts would have devastating consequences for our most vulnerable Mainers.

The Kennebec County Crisis Receiving Center was a priority of ME-RAP during the last legislative session because of the desperate need for crisis services in this area. Specifically, there is an urgent demand for a 24-hour facility to support individuals with mental health or substance use challenges. The proposed center was intended to fill this void, providing immediate stabilization and connecting individuals to services. Securing funding for this center was a reflection of Maine's commitment to addressing mental health and substance use crises. Without this center, individuals in crisis will continue to overburden emergency rooms and law enforcement resources, neither of which are equipped to provide the specialized care needed. The absence of this service will lead to poorer outcomes and higher costs across the system.

ME-RAP is also opposed to the proposal to reduce the number of months a person may receive housing assistance from General Assistance from 9 months to 3 months in any 12 month period. This proposal would significantly impair the ability of people in recovery to access and maintain recovery housing. Limiting GA eligibility to 3 months may not give individuals enough time to achieve financial stability as they are engaging in recovery programming and building the foundation of a life in long-term recovery. Furthermore, without access to recovery housing, individuals are more likely to return to environments that contributed to their substance use, increasing the likelihood of relapse and potentially overdose deaths.

We are asking that the Appropriations Committee reconsider these budgetary cuts. Maine has made significant strides in addressing the addiction, mental health, and housing crises, and these proposals threaten to undo much of that progress. The recovery community is resilient, but cutting lifelines will only perpetuate cycles of crisis and accrue more costs.



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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tess Parks
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Maine Recovery Action Project (ME-RAP)