

Craig Fishburn
Bangor
LD 514

I am a recovering addict/alcoholic and I have seen the devastating effects of the opiate crisis firsthand since the late 1990s. I have lost countless friends to this disease. Many wanted to get better but the resources of detox and sober housing were not available at that time. Today they are but they require funding to operate. There are things we can do to save lives. Today's session is one of them, increasing payments for detox will ensure the detox stays open and that people on mainecare get the same healthcare as private insurance provides. I am a house manager at Fresh Start in Bangor and many of our residents come direct from detox. Most depend on GA to pay their rent of \$750, way below market rates. But there has been talk of limiting GA in order to balance the budget. Many sober house residents depend on GA and many are in no condition to return to work within 90 days. Some never will be ready to return to work due to a complex situation where they have many ailments and setbacks that are physical and psychological in nature but not extreme enough to go on disability. Keep in mind many of these people are undereducated and have lived on the streets or in trap houses for the majority of their life. Access to detox saves lives and sober living nurtures life. Limiting GA payments means people in recovery go back on the street which is a death sentence for addicts. You might as well stick a needle in their arm. I realize today is not about GA but these issues are so intricate and are always related. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. My spelling is poor and my grammar is worse so thank you.