

Preston Sanborn  
Westbrook  
LD 219

Needs based syringe distribution follows evidence-based, best harm reduction practices. When people who inject drugs are denied access to sterile equipment, they have to resort to unsafe practices such as sharing or reusing syringes, which leads to infections and pathogen transmission. When Portland previously was restricted to a 1 for 1 syringe exchange model, I spoke to many people who were put in dangerous situations due to lack of access. People would pick up discarded syringes from strangers and inject with them because they weren't able to get enough sterile syringes of their own. There were many cases where people had their syringes confiscated by law enforcement or stolen by other desperate people, and they were then left with no syringes to exchange for new ones. Implementing a 1 for 1 syringe restriction will not reduce injection drug use or syringe litter in Maine, but it will have a negative health impact on our state, most urgently a likely rise in HIV and Hepatitis C cases among people who inject drugs.