

To: Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

From: Becky Humphrey, CEO

Date: May 1, 2025

Subject: LD 1753 – An Act to Establish the Upper St. John Valley Recovery High School Program

Chairpersons Rafferty, Murphy, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony Neither for Nor Against on LD 1753 – An Act to Establish the Upper St. John Valley Recovery High School Program.

AGENCY BACKGROUND

My name is Becky Humphrey, Chief Executive Officer of [Day One](#), a leading provider of substance use and mental health treatment services for adolescents and families for over 50 years.

We are best known for operating the **ONLY** residential substance use disorder treatment programs in Maine for teenagers 13 to 18 years old. Although our main offices are in Windham, we serve youth and families from across the entire state through our residential program – including as far north as Ashland and Madawaska. We've attached a list of all cities and towns we've served to our testimony. In addition to our residential program, we offer a full continuum of substance use and behavioral health treatment, including:

- **School-based programs**: We provide low barrier, easily accessible and integrated treatment at several middle and high schools, helping students overcome and manage behavioral, emotional, and social problems that have been impacting home or school.
- **Case management services**, that directly help people with increasingly complex health problems, navigate challenges of medical care coordination, employment, housing, financial assistance, and transportation.
- **Outpatient services** along the full continuum of substance use treatment and mental health treatment, including psychiatric medication management, and an unhoused program at locations in both Lewiston-Auburn, and Portland

OUR INTEREST IN LD 1753

Day One worked with the 131st Legislature on [LD 291, a Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study the Feasibility of Establishing a Recovery High School in the State](#) (attached). It passed as amended by the Health and Human Services Committee, passed on the Consent Calendar in the House, but died upon adjournment on the Special Study Table.

In addition to LD 291, approximately five years ago, Day One worked side-by-side with the Department of Corrections and Good Will Hinkley on a proposal to develop Maine's first Recovery High School on the campus of Good Will-Hinkley (attached). The goal of the proposal was to establish a comprehensive secondary school program that would lead to the awarding of a secondary school diploma while providing intensive support for students recovering from substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders (both substance use and mental health) such as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder or other mental health conditions. Also included in the proposal were services to support the families of the teens enrolled at the high school. The initiative was sidelined during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I have great passion for an effective education AND treatment model for Maine middle school and high school aged students. I personally went to Massachusetts and toured five of their recovery high schools to learn all I could on how we could transfer that into a similar model in Maine.

What I learned from existing high school models is that they work to address the substance use challenges of students, but the primary goal is the academic side of the equation. Substance use treatment, although treated as best they can, oftentimes becomes secondary or through crisis management.

The primary challenge for us in our residential program is matching the current educational component to the success of our treatment model.

To be clear, we support the model outlined in LD 1753, due to our ongoing expertise and decades long experiences on the ground, we respectfully request the Committee formally include Day One in any legislatively approved plan contained with – or amended – as part of LD 1753.

Thank you for the opportunity to add our comments to the discussion. I'd be happy to answer any questions or provide more information for you to consider prior to, or at an upcoming Work Session.