

Maggie Zall
Portland
LD 1328

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Honorable Members of the Housing & Economic Development Committee,

My name is Maggie Zall, and I am a resident of Portland. I am submitting testimony to voice my strong and unwavering support for LD 1328, an essential piece of legislation that will establish three recovery residences specifically designed to serve LGBTQIA+ individuals seeking recovery from substance use disorder (SUD). I am currently the director of a harm reduction program, often supporting our participants who decide to move toward abstinence. This includes connecting them with recovery housing. In my last job, I was a lead clinician who often referred individuals to sober living. I've seen the barriers to obtaining safe, secure housing for our LGBTQIA+ community. LGBTQIA+ individuals are over 25% more likely to live with alcohol use disorder, and are 9.5 times more likely to develop a heroin addiction. It is paramount to create specific spaces catered to their needs. On a personal level, I am a member of the LGBTQIA+ community who recently celebrated 8 years sober. I am well aware that LGBTQIA+ individuals are at least 4 times more likely to face violence than our heterosexual counterparts, and this includes being in shared living spaces. We have to be willing to invest in creating safety for EVERYONE searching for recovery.

LD 1328 ensures that at least three certified recovery residences - each in different-sized localities - are led and governed by LGBTQIA+ individuals in recovery. Not only will these residences provide living and meeting spaces, but will prioritize peer-led services that foster a supportive, affirming environment. This investment is critical to ensure that all Mainers, regardless of identity, have equitable access to recovery residences that truly meet their needs.

By passing LD 1328 we can make meaningful, powerful progress in addressing the gaps in recovery housing. We can also ensure that LGBTQIA+ community members have the support they need to heal and thrive. I urge this community to support its passage.

I thank you again for your time and consideration. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have at any time.