



Consumer Council System of Maine
A Voice for Consumers of Mental Health Services

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Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Simonne Maline. I am the Executive Director for the Consumer Council System of Maine (CCSM). I am here today on behalf of the CCSM to testify **in support of LD 1946, "An Act to Clarify the Eligibility of Certified Recovery Residences for Bridging Rental Assistance Program Housing Vouchers"**.

The Consumer Council System of Maine is a public instrumentality written into State Statute by the Maine Legislature to serve in an advisory capacity and to provide legislators with guidance and advice regarding the delivery of effective and appropriate adult mental health services from those served by them.

This bill proposes a much-needed clarification: that certified recovery residents should be eligible for Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP) housing vouchers. LD 1946 is about aligning supportive housing resources with the needs of people in recovery from substance use and mental health challenges. It ensures that individuals residing in certified recovery residences, which offer structured, supportive environments for rebuilding lives, are not excluded from critical rental support solely due to the setting in which they are choosing to heal.

The Bridging Rental Assistance Program is a lifeline for Mainers with serious mental health conditions, many of whom cannot access other types of housing due to discrimination, stigma, or poverty. It was designed to fill a crucial gap between homelessness or institutional care and permanent housing. Excluding certified recovery residences from BRAP eligibility undermines the intent of the program and creates inequities for people who are actively working toward recovery. We understand that the program is currently not issuing new vouchers, but this change would ensure these individuals are included once the program resumes.

In closing, we urge this Committee to vote **Ought to Pass on LD 1946**. By doing so, you recognize the value of recovery residences and ensure that BRAP serves those it was meant to help, Mainers who are striving toward stability and independence.

Thank you for your time and commitment to mental health advocacy and housing justice.

Sincerely,

Simonne M. Maline

Executive Director