



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Nina Azella Milliken

276 Turkey Farm Road

Blue Hill, ME 04614

Phone: (207) 412-8828

Nina.milliken@legislature.maine.gov

Testimony of Rep. Nina Milliken supporting
**LD 979, Resolve, to Fund Treatment Services and Certain Transportation
Costs for Individuals with Substance Use Disorder**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and fellow members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Nina Milliken and I have the good fortune to represent House District 16 which consists of the fine people of the towns of Blue Hill, Brooksville, Castine, Sedgwick, Surry, and Trenton and I come before you to testify in support of **LD 979, Resolve, to Fund Treatment Services and Certain Transportation Costs for Individuals with Substance Use Disorder** that is before the Committee's consideration.

I also have the good fortune of being able to stand before you today and tell you that I have 8 years of sustained sobriety from a powerful addiction to heroin and other opioids. Life as a person with substance use disorder is hard. Life as a person addicted to opioids is specifically very hard. I have quit many substances in my life. The most painful of those were opiates. Detox is an excruciating experience, and people who have to do it deserve help.

My community lost four people this last summer to drug overdoses. One of those was a teenager. Prior to being in the legislature, I was a high school teacher at a small non-traditional high school in Blue Hill. The teenager's death was a devastating loss to many of the kids that I work with, and many of the children of my close friends. Communities are shattered when people die and they are further harmed when those deaths are preventable.

716 Mainers lost their lives to this diagnosable disease last year.¹ Those Mainers are loved and missed every single day. Those Mainers are people like me, people with families, with jobs, and with communities that love them and grieve daily for their loss. As it currently sits in Maine, often when people state that they are ready to seek out recovery services, they are unfortunately not greeted immediately with a bed to facilitate that recovery. They are often put on a waitlist. We owe it to these Mainers to have the beds available to receive them the minute that they are ready. This missed opportunity leads to deaths of valuable people across the state.

¹ Marcella H. Sorg, Daniel S. Soucier, Abby Leidenfrost (2022). Maine Monthly Overdose Report. https://mainedrugdata.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2022-12-ME_Monthly_OD_Report_final.pdf

The Maine Recovery Advocacy Project (ME-RAP) gave me this pin. Every overdose is a policy failure. I don't think it needs any further explanation than that. We need detox beds. I repeat, we NEED detox beds. Your friends, neighbors, and your loved ones need detox beds. Your children, your grandchildren, your nieces and nephews need detox beds. In sum, please support LD 979 and help Mainers who are struggling with Substance Use Disorder access treatment.