



Testimony in Opposition of LD 1094
LD 1094 An Act Regarding the Allocation of Funds Awarded to Maine Due to Opioid Settlement

April 3rd, 2023

Kwe' (greetings) Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and other honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee of Health and Human Services, My name is Steven Knockwood. I am the Deputy Organizing Director for the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project (ME-RAP) and a resident of Augusta, Maine. I stand before you today to give testimony in opposition to LD 1094 "An Act Regarding the Allocation of Funds Awarded to Maine Due to Opioid Settlement" on behalf of our network.

We as a collective of voices representing people in recovery, people who use substances, family members and our allies across the state and its many bi-partisan collaborative partners worked in the 130th Legislative Session with your committee on LD 1722: An Act To Ensure Access to All Paths to Recovery for Persons Affected by Opioids Using Money Obtained through Litigation against Opioid Manufacturers.

The primary purpose of this legislation was to build on the work of the Maine Attorney General's Office to create the Maine Recovery Council, a council responsible for overseeing 50% of Maine's share of the opioid settlement monies, and add additional voices of people with lived or living experiences of substance use, the impact of incarceration, harm reduction, and a treatment professional.

This work was guided by best practice standards that tell us that to achieve the greatest impact on the epidemic that has engulfed our state, communities, families and individuals lives depends on all voices being represented when any and all allocation of monies won in the settlement is being decided.

LD 1094 looks to strip 64% or \$9,000,000 of the total allocated monies \$14,000,000 directed to be overseen by the Council in the fiscal year 2023. This act would circumvent the process agreed upon by advocates for the voices of lived life experience, the Maine Legislative Branch, the Executive Branch, the

Attorney General's Office, and all others who worked to ensure a fair process of allocation.



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To move this money out of the control of the recovery council removes the voice of those directly affected and a fair process of allocation. Because of these factors we are asking your committee to vote in opposition to LD 1094.

Courtney Gary-Allen, ME-RAP's organizing director, also wanted me to extend her apologies for not being present at today's public hearing. She is currently flying back from Austria, where she was at a summit of global drug policy experts. She will be available at the worksession if your committee has any questions for her. Thank you.

Nitap(thank you),

Steven Knockwood

Deputy Organizing Director, ME-RAP

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