



Testimony in Favor of LD 1315: An Act to Require Instruction in Schools on Substance Use Prevention and Administration of Naloxone Hydrochloride

April 11th, 2023

Greetings Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and other honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee of Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Steven Knockwood, I am the Deputy Organizing Director of Maine Recovery Advocacy Project (ME-RAP), a grassroots bi-partisan network of advocates, lawmakers, and organizations working on community and public policy based solutions to substance use. I am also a resident of Augusta, Maine.

I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1315 An Act to Require Instructions in Schools on Substance Use Prevention and Administration of Naloxone Hydrochloride on behalf of our network. I would like to take a moment and recognize Senator Matt Pouliot for bringing forth this LD and for the time and effort to work with our youth organizers in regards to this issue.

ME-RAP has involved youth in our advocacy work since 2021 when a young person who was affected by having a loved one incarcerated for the symptoms of a disease. This individual worked to create a bill to lower the cost of phone calls in Prisons and Jails in Maine. They believed that socioeconomic barriers should not negatively impact the need for a strong relationship between a parent and their child. Out of this was born the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project Youth Caucus. This caucus now has teams in three counties, including Kennebec, Washington and with our recent launch in Penobscot County in mid March.

Part of my duties as Deputy Organizing Director is to support these caucuses, which has truly widened my perspective on issues concerning this community and enforced my belief that we always need to look within the community when searching to identify potential issues and looking to form policies impacting them. This belief remains valid when we form policy impacting youth. We need their voice represented at the table.

Through a series of film screenings of the Documentary “ Recovery in Maine: Youth Voices” by Points North Media and community conversations that followed each screening. Our youth advocates have spoken and ME-RAP supports that voice and the vision of these young people. ME-RAP asks for each and every member of this committee to please listen to these subject matter experts in the testimonies to follow. Join with their allies and support LD 1315

We did also want to mention that it has come to our attention from Senator Moore that there should be a small language change to expand the types of Naloxone that can be used to train people with to ensure that all versions of Naloxone could be used. We are supportive of this effort and can provide your committee with the language suggestion at the work session.

Thank you,

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