



Testimony in Favor of LD 1116
An Act to provide Rural Sober Living to Mothers

April 25, 2023

Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing,

My name is Courtney Gary-Allen. I am the Organizing Director of the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project (ME-RAP), a grassroots bi-partisan network of lawmakers, advocates, and organizations working on community and public policy based solutions to substance use in Maine. Throughout my professional career I have helped to propose, write, and pass countless pieces of legislation on matters relating to recovery housing. I am here today to testify in Favor of LD 1116 An Act to provide Rural Sober Living to Mothers on behalf of our network.

This legislation seeks to meet a dire need in Maine: housing for mothers who are in recovery and their children. As you all are well aware, Mainer's from all walks of life are struggling to find, secure, and maintain quality housing that fits their needs, and mothers in or seeking recovery are no different. Furthermore, this housing seeks to center on the family reunification process. This is particularly important as in Maine more than 50% of Child Protective cases have something to do with a parent's parental substance use. This bill isn't just about building housing, it's about rebuilding families, communities, and investing in the next generation of Mainers.

I was also asked to let the committee know that the Maine Association of Recovery Residences is also in favor of this legislation. They wish they could be here today but have another pressing matter to attend to and they wanted me to read the following statement:

“MARR, the Maine Association of Recovery Residences, is a statewide nonprofit with 75 residences and 800 bed capacity, fully supports the concept of LD 1116. Currently we have less than a dozen beds that can accept women with children and none for men with children. LD 1116 would more than double this capacity, and for the first time add recovery living for any qualified family. Substance use disorder is a family illness and LD 1116 will go far to enhance family healing and reunification. While we have questions about sustainable funding, we look forward to defining this at the forthcoming work session.”

And with that I am happy to answer any questions and will be available to you if you need me at the work session. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Courtney Gary-Allen
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