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Lewiston, Maine  
Testimony in Opposition to LD 109

January 30th, 2023

Good Morning Senator Bee-Bee Center, Representative Salisbury, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee;

My name is John Clark. and I am a constituent from Lewiston. I am here today to oppose LD109 because I'm aware of the impact it will have on individuals just like me.

I am a person in long-term recovery from drugs and alcohol and graduate of Kennebec County Co-Occurring Disorders Court. Today I'm over three years clean. I'm a Licensed certified Alcohol and drug counselor, a certified intentional peer support specialist, a provisional behavioral health professional, a re-entry and re-integration specialist, and a trained and registered recovery coach. The reason I found success was not just because of a lot of hard work ,and dedication, it's because I had a sober house to go to when I transitioned from rehab. A safe Place with others to help pick me up when I felt triggered.

I work with the Maine Prisoner Re-entry Network as a Program Director and I am the owner, founder, and executive director of A Hand Up Recovery and Re-entry housing in Lewiston. Our recovery residences are certified through the Maine Association of Recovery Residences.

My sober house managers and residents have done outreach within the community of Lewiston and have reversed 10 overdoses to count they are currently working with the jubilee trinity church and the rest center as volunteers. These folks are volunteering in our communities, working, and giving back every single day. They have changed their lives, because they found purpose and a family within our recovery house. Here at A Hand Up we connect with empathy ,understanding, open mindedness and love! I hire from within and because of their lived experience they have the secret sauce it takes to get through to others who suffer from the same disease! It makes each of them an invaluable asset to the community of Lewiston.

If I were forced to pay for a sprinkler system ,which I have in fact looked at, from quotes in the past we would be talking around a 100 thousand dollars for our facilities I would be forced to shut my doors and I can only speculate what would happen to my residents who I think of as family!

As a professional in this field, and a person with substance use disorder myself, I can tell you what would most likely happen especially during a housing crisis: lots of them would die.



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Substance use disorder must be treated and the most successful way to do so is with connection that has been dubbed the opposite of active addiction. I'm one company of sober housing. We barely make rent payments, much less can afford sprinklers .I have never had a fire nor heard of one but I can tell you firsthand how many are dying from this disease daily! Please I implore you don't take away our first and most important line of defense by passing LD 109.