

My name is Jeremy Hiltz, I am a person in long term recovery, a person who transitioned from incarceration into a recovery residence. I also founded and am the CEO of Recovery Connections of Maine and Recovery Housing of Maine. We operate a outpatient addiction clinic, 4 MARR Certified recovery residences, and a 20 bed residential program. I strongly oppose LD 109.

One of our biggest partners is the Department of Corrections where approximately half of our population is either reentering from prison or are on the home confinement program. Currently we have 7 men enrolled in college, 12 working full time, 2 have started their own construction businesses. 7 have obtained their drivers licenses and vehicles, 5 regularly volunteer in the community and all are in substance use disorder treatment. We have transitioned 32 men into their own apartments or back with their families over the last 22 months. Most importantly they have found community and family. They go shopping together, eat meals together, set goals together and coexist together. Just like any other family. Any other family of the same size would not need a sprinkler system installed in their home and the risk is the same.

We have been able to expand our programming over the last year due to a need that we have seen in the community as well as in the Department of Corrections. There is a lack of housing in Maine in general. The passage of LD 109 will in fact make that problem worsen. It has the potential to displace hundreds of vulnerable people. Not allowing LD 109 to pass will allow Maine to continue to grow its ever evolving recovery community and provide places for people to have a chance to safely transition back in tot the community.

I want to acknowledge the safety concern that LD 109 wishes to address. As a member of the Maine Association of Recovery Residences we are required to have home inspections, carbon monoxide and fire alarms, fire extinguishers, evacuation plans on the walls, egresses free of barriers and more to ensure that this home is safe. MARR has been a guide when I have had questions and they have held me accountable to ensuring that the homes are safe. MARR provides some peace of mind to me that its members are also running safe houses. Adding unnecessary (sprinkler systems) equipment at exorbitant costs would shut our program down.

Thank you for your time.