

Thomas P. Caswell on LD-109

Hello, my name is Thomas Philip Caswell, I am here today because I understand what the impact of Act LD-109 will have on our community. I say this because I fear for the lives of my fellow people in recovery, their families, and everyone else in our beautiful state of Maine. A little over 2 years ago I found myself at the door to sobriety. I needed a place to live that would provide a structure of living which included stable housing, support through my recovery, and a family of individuals who, like me, wanted to change their lives. I found that at a sober house here in Maine. I had little to no financial stability and certainly could not live on my own without the overwhelming temptation of drugs in our community. The sober house I lived at provided me a place to be as I began to build myself back into a productive member of our community. It was truly the building block of my sobriety, the foundation for which I could pour the concrete. Today I work in the recovery field at a residential re-entry program in York County, Maine. I am a full-time student pursuing a degree in mental health and I have just been nominated by my teachers to the Dean's Advisory list to aid in the direction of the school. I am also a certified recovery coach in the State of Maine, and the list goes on. But this isn't about me. It's about the sober houses that help people like me get to where they too can thrive in this world, and in doing so create a better community for all.

I leave with one last thing. In 2022, as reported by the Maine Drug Data Hub, our beautiful State of Maine lost 650 lives to fatal overdoses throughout the year. Where I do not know the statistics of death by fire in our state during this year, I can say confidently with the upmost assurance that it does not surpass this number. If preventing death and saving lives is our number one safety concern, I need speak no more.

Thank you