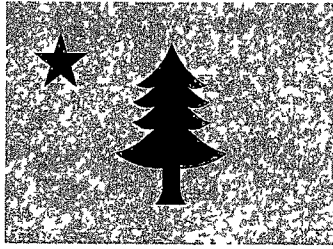


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STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
PROSECUTORIAL DISTRICT IV

May 3, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Co, my name is Maeghan Maloney, I am the District Attorney for Kennebec and Somerset Counties and the President of the Maine Prosecutors Association (“MPA”) and I am submitting this written testimony in support of LD 1719, An Act to Establish Substance Use Disorder Treatment Centers.

Unfortunately, right now in the State of Maine the fastest path to free substance use disorder treatment is jail. This is why I am here today. I have talked to parents who have asked me if I could guarantee their adult children would receive treatment if they called law enforcement to report illegal activity. Of course, I cannot guarantee that. I’ve talked to people who thought if they went to the emergency room they could detox there overnight. Of course, this is not the purpose of our emergency rooms.

In the Augusta area, in our beautiful capitol city, we have only a jail for people seeking a safe place to detox and begin treatment. It should not be this way. People should not have to go to jail to get access to treatment. People should be able to access treatment in their communities.

And while we wait for that, at least two Maine people die every day from substance use disorder. We must change this statistic. We must offer treatment. When law enforcement can bring a person to a treatment center instead of jail—they will. I am convinced that if we take this emergency step, our deaths will decrease and our communities will be a more humane place to live.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Speaker Talbot Ross for sponsoring this bill and to Somerset County’s Senator Farrin for co-sponsoring.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/Maeghan Maloney

Maeghan Maloney
District Attorney