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Testimony in Favor of LD 1714

An Act To Create a Sustainable Funding Source for Recovery Community Centers

May 5th, 2023

Committee on Taxation  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Joseph Hartel  
Bangor, ME 04401

Re Passage of LD 1714

Dear Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

Becoming a volunteer at the Bangor Area Recovery Network saved my life. My name is Joseph Hartel, and I am a Bangor resident. I am also a person in recovery from substance use disorder. Which for me means I haven't used any mood- or mind-altering drugs since July 3, 2019.

After countless attempts at recovery, I spent 6 months at the Maine General Residential program in Sidney, Maine. Afterwards I returned to my home in Hampden, Maine. I felt isolated and I lacked the support and connection necessary to sustain my recovery. I had been to the BARN before to attend recovery meetings. The shame and stigma of addiction made it difficult to take those first steps. However, I had a feeling that if I just kept showing up at the BARN, I could stay clean and sober. I met Bob and Sharon and started volunteering at the recovery center a few days a week.

The BARN provided an atmosphere of recovery and healing. I was able to meet a diverse group of recovering individuals who created a safe space that was both accepting and empowering. With the support of trained recovery coaches and volunteers I was able to start identifying some goals I wanted to work on. Having a purpose energized my recovery and catapulted me into a lifestyle where service to others became paramount. I got a job in the recovery field. I got my license, and I went to college.

*Recovery is a process  
There are many pathways to recovery  
Recovery overcomes shame and stigma  
Supporting recovery is a community responsibility*

Today I supervise 55 volunteers who donate over a thousand hours of their time each month. Each of these people has a story how BARN has impacted their lives. I get to watch as people whose lives have been destroyed by SUD become transformed through the connectedness they experience. Supporting recovery is a community responsibility. It truly takes a village to heal and rebuild a life. Recovery centers like a BARN provide that support every day, offering a place for people in crisis, people who may be justice-involved, people who seek to rejoin the workforce and society, and anyone seeking to sustain their long-term recovery.

This is why passing LD 1714 is so important. Recovery centers lower crime and add to the public health of the city and county in which they're located. With the current substance use crisis, the State of Maine has more demand than resources available to meet that need. People need more than words and hope, they need space and support to recover.

Sincerely,



Joseph Hartel

Volunteer Coordinator

Bangor Area Recovery Network. It truly takes a village to heal and rebuild a life.