

Testimony in Favor of LD 1714  
An Act To Create a Sustainable Funding Source for Recovery Community Centers

May 10, 2023

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

My name is Amy Clark, I am a Bangor resident, a member of the Board of Directors at the Bangor Area Recovery Network (BARN), the very first Recovery Community Center in the State of Maine, a volunteer organizer for the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project, and an affected other. I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1714 An Act to Create a Sustainable Funding Source for Recovery Community Centers

Anyone who has ever spoken to me about my time volunteering at BARN knows that a 3-minute time limit is simply laughable, so I am just going to try to keep this as simple as possible

Recovery community centers like BARN didn't exist when my family needed them, and what I remember the most from that time is the profound loneliness. How it felt like we really were the only ones in the world, suffering silently, while the inescapable black cloud of our loved one's substance use hung over us.

I think that's why I knew immediately when I walked into BARN for the first time that it was the most special place I had ever been, and I just had to be a part of it. I didn't really know anything about substance use disorder, I didn't really know anything about recovery, I really didn't even know what I was doing there. I just knew that somehow, I wanted to try to help families like mine. I never could have imagined how much they would end up helping me in return.

I tell everyone who asks, and a lot of people who don't, that I was sure I would go there, volunteer for a few hours, and then go about my merry life. That was six years ago this week.

For six years now I have had the privilege and honor to sit with families like mine, to hold their hands while they cried, and cheer when they were happy, and above all else to make sure they knew that they were never alone.

For six years I have been able to have a front row seat to watch some of the most amazing people I have ever met, a few of whom are here today, transform their lives in ways I never even knew were possible.

And while I don't have time to get into the details here, I will just say that you cannot have these experiences or witness these honest to God miracles without being

profoundly changed by them forever. I am a kinder, healthier, happier human being, because of what a recovery community center did for me.

So, while today you have, and will hear so many stories from people who are in recovery from SUD, please know that these centers also help affected others, and entire communities. Our world is a much better place with them here. Please support LD 1714 to make sure that these centers can continue doing what they do best and help to ensure that no one ever has to feel alone again.

Thank you, I am happy to answer any questions.

Amy B. Clark  
Bangor, Maine