



Testimony in Support of LD 1975

January 17th, 2024

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Respected Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Steven Haskins and I'm a resident of Hallowell. My story is very similar to many others, with two major exceptions. In 1999, I had major back surgery and was prescribed oxycontin prior to, and after my surgery. Despite being told by doctors this '*revolutionary new drug*' was unlike other opioids, I quickly became addicted on both occasions. Out of shame, I hid this fact from friends and family. In an effort to not get red flagged by my doctors, I resorted to paying expensive street prices rather than continue to ask for '*legitimate prescriptions*'.

My cycle of addiction continued for 15 years. I ALWAYS had a small amount of opiates with me at all times. I was knee deep in a very challenging career field and could not afford to go through withdrawals. Plus, my altered brain convinced me I was '*allowed to have this vice*' because I had a bad back.

In a single, fleeting moment of clarity in 2017, I asked for help. I checked myself into rehab. Here's where my story is different from most. My employer had a generous Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that paid 100% of my 30 day in-house rehab. I asked for help on Tuesday July 11th and was in rehab Sunday, five days later. Most people I met in rehab were not as fortunate as me.

I also learned in rehab almost everyone else, except me, had suffered life altering consequences in their addiction cycles. How I managed to squeeze through the cracks without ever getting caught '*carrying illegal drugs*' is beyond me. I was flying all over the country for my job.

LD 1975 will help people that don't have robust, time-sensitive EAPS.
LD1975 also gives people an opportunity to avoid life-long consequences for possessing small amounts of '*illegal drugs*' until they find their single fleeting moment of clarity.

Please support LD1975. Thank you for this opportunity and your time today.

Sincerely,
Steven Haskins
Citizen of Maine
(415) 516-6399
steven.r.haskins@gmail.com