

**Testimony in Support of LD 1975**  
**An Act to An Act to Implement a Statewide Public Health Response to Substance Use and**  
**Amend the Laws Governing Scheduled Drugs**

January 12th, 2024

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Respected Members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Jenny Jordan. I am a resident of Alna. I am here to share my journey as someone who has fought against the challenges of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) alongside my son Steven. We lost.

It's been 4 years since my son passed. Since then I have served in my community by supporting individuals struggling with mental health and addiction, as well as trying to help bridge the gap to those needing services. I actively contribute to our community by singing at various events trying to help with ending the stigma associated with mental health and addiction, and helping to raise awareness of this epidemic. We've been at war with drugs for over 50 years, and we are losing.

I am writing to express my support for LD 1975. During my son's struggle with SUD, which only lasted a few short years, he encountered constant interactions with the criminal justice system, all stemming from the symptoms of this disease. The consequences created barriers and limited his opportunities, as well as kept him from treatment. He never received any treatment whatsoever, he spent 6 months in jail, and died within a month of being released.

LD 1975 has the potential to ensure that families and friends facing SUD receive essential support and services they desperately need, allowing them a path to recovery. This legislation aims to eliminate the burden of criminal charges for personal possession, accelerating access to services without the obstacles of long waitlists. It helps create the possibility of a future where families can heal and prosper without barriers due to the criminalization of SUD.

Addressing this SUD crisis, and diminishing the impact of the criminal justice system involvement, LD 1975 encourages that change needed to break the cycle that people who are struggling most times will face throughout their lives. For the future of those affected by SUD, so they can pursue their goals without unjust barriers, emerging as productive members in our community. I urge you to support LD 1975, contributing to the collective effort to shift from the criminalization of a disease to a system of restoration and healing that individuals suffering from SUD need. This is a public health crisis. The response to drugs should be handled by doctors and therapists, not police officers and prison guards.

Your assistance is so crucial in making this change happen. I not only encourage you, I beg for you to cast your vote in favor of LD 1975 and help us by contributing to a solution that will positively impact countless members of our communities' lives. Thank you for your attention. I am available to address any questions you may have.

Sincerely,  
Jenny Jordan  
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