

Testimony in Support of LD 1975

January 17th, 20204

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

My name is Felicia, I am a resident of Freeport, a loving mother, dedicated employee at a local hospital with a background in Mental Health and Addiction Studies and a MS in Criminal Justice. I am also a member of the community whose substance use disorder spanned over the course of two decades. Through my personal and employment history I have experienced and witnessed the insurmountable damage SUD can do. This is why I am writing to express my support for LD 1975.

During my struggle with SUD I not only experienced multiple interactions with the criminal justice system but I felt the absence of almost everything this bill has to offer. It was not until I found a community that offered me the space to heal and recover, as well as assist me in connecting with any resources and support I may need along my journey that I was able to start to thrive.

History shows the way we have been handling this epidemic is not working, it is time that we come to this from another angle and begin to get to the route of the problem. This is an emergent issue that we need to start treating from all sides; physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. By doing this we will be cutting down on the costs of resources we spend within the criminal justice system, reduce recidivism rates, and positively impact not only those struggling with SUD, but their families, future generations and any other person or place impacted by the ripple effect of this disease.

I see people on almost a daily basis looking for the support and services they need and leave feeling desperate and defeated and I too remember what that was like. Not knowing where to go or who to turn to. This bill can change all of that. It can help provide immediate assistance which ultimately could be the difference between saving a life or death for the individual.

I know this is a big change, and with change brings up a lot of feelings. That is normal, I encourage you to sit with them and let them go. This bill has the potential to change and positively affect our entire community and it relies on your response in being in favor of this crucial decision. I ask that you vote in favor of LD 1975 so we may start treating this disease for what it is and begin to see a future with positive outcomes that benefit us all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Felicia McArthur

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