



February 22nd, 2024

Good Afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and Members of the Appropriations Committee and Members of the Taxation Committee

My name is Kathie Williams, and I serve as the Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Larry Labonte Recovery Center in Rumford. As a person in long-term recovery myself, I am deeply committed to supporting others on their journey to wellness.

Today, I come before you to advocate for the allocation of 12% of the Cannabis Sales Tax to Recovery Centers in Maine. This allocation is crucial to ensuring the sustainability of vital services for our community members seeking recovery.

When we established the Larry Labonte Recovery Center, our vision was to create a centrally located, nonjudgmental, and safe space where individuals could access support groups and guidance tailored to their unique paths to recovery. Our goal has always been to connect individuals with the resources they need for substance use disorder and mental health wellness, all at no cost to them.

Over the past four years, we have expanded our services significantly. We now offer Peer Recovery Coaching to our community, extend support to local schools by providing recovery coaching to students facing addiction challenges, and conduct essential training and distributions of life-saving Naloxone. Additionally, our center hosts a variety of support meetings and sober events, demonstrating that a fulfilling life in recovery is attainable.

We are proud to collaborate with other organizations, engage in SUD prevention initiatives, and reach out to marginalized communities through Diversity Days at local schools and visits to the Oxford County Jail. However, despite our passionate efforts, securing funding remains a constant challenge.

While we receive partial funding from DHHS grants, we are burdened with the annual grant application process. We also dedicate significant time to seeking out and applying for smaller grants, as well as organizing fundraising events. These efforts, while necessary, detract from our primary mission of supporting individuals in their recovery journeys.

By allocating a portion of the Cannabis Sales Tax to Recovery Centers like ours, you can help ensure that we can continue our critical work without the constant distraction of financial uncertainty. Your support will enable us to focus our energy on fulfilling our mission of providing hope, support, and guidance to those in need. Thank you for considering this important allocation.

I urge you to lend your support to LD1714, which aims to bolster Maine's Recovery Centers. Your support will enable us to expand our reach, enhance our services, and ultimately make a positive impact on the lives of countless individuals struggling with addiction. Thank you for considering this crucial initiative.

Thank you,

Kathie Williams

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