



Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services: my name is Adam Zuckerman and I am the lobbyist for the Maine People's Alliance.

Our 32,000 members stretch from Kittery to Fort Kent and we are committed to creating a state of Maine where everyone has what they need, everyone contributes what they can, and no one is left behind.

Unfortunately, every day far too many of our fellow Mainers are still left behind. We are losing nearly two Mainers a day to the overdose crisis, and most of us have been personally touched by this, no matter who we are and what part of the state we're from.

We commend the Mills administration for proposing investments in recovery. In particular, funding a crisis receiving center in Lewiston and medication assisted treatment and other health care in county jails will save lives.

However, we can do much more. At nearly a billion dollars, the Rainy Day Fund is at its statutory limit. With regularly higher revenue than expected, the general fund is projected to grow by an estimated \$123 million per year on average between fiscal years 2024 and 2027, with the rate of growth accelerating over time.

However, the Governor's proposed budget sets aside an additional \$107 million. With just a small portion of that, we could fund a significant amount of recovery housing with wraparound services, hundreds of beds for inpatient treatment, and dozens of recovery community centers for Mainers struggling with substance use disorder.

We face an overdose crisis that is killing Mainers every day. When we choose to inexplicably set aside \$107 million, we are making a conscious decision not to fund solutions that would save lives. That would save the lives of our friends, neighbors, and family members.

While we appreciate the proposed investments in recovery, we know that we can do better. We urge you to reject setting aside \$107 million and instead make investments that will save lives. Thank you.