



Testimony on LD 210: An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027

February 3, 2025

Good Afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and Honorable Members of the Taxation and Appropriations Committees,

My name is Courtney Gary-Allen, and I am the Executive Director of Maine Recovery Action Project (ME-RAP), a bipartisan grassroots network dedicated to addressing substance use issues in Maine through community-driven and policy-based solutions. I am here today to testify on behalf of ME-RAP neither for nor against a portion of the proposed biennial budget in LD 210.

As many of you may remember, during the 131st Legislative Session, recovery advocates from across the state collaborated with legislators to enact LD 1714: An Act to Create a Sustainable Funding Source for Recovery Community Centers Using a Percentage of the Adult Use Cannabis Tax Revenue. This legislation provides an annual transfer of \$2,000,000 from the Adult Use Cannabis Public Health and Safety and Municipal Opt-in Fund to support the operations and capacity of Recovery Community Centers (RCCs).

RCCs are organizations led and governed by representatives of local recovery communities, focusing primarily on recovery from substance use disorder. They provide nonclinical, peer recovery support services such as recovery support groups, recovery coaching, telephone recovery support, skill-building groups, harm reduction activities, outreach programs for individuals seeking or in recovery, and recovery-focused policy and advocacy initiatives. RCCs have been proven to help individuals maintain long-term recovery, build recovery capital, and improve their overall quality of life.

I am here today to flag a concern regarding Part F of the proposed budget, which reduces the adult use cannabis sales tax and excise tax transfers to the Adult Use Cannabis Public Health and Safety and Municipal Opt-in Fund from 12% to 9%. Before approving this section of the budget, we respectfully request that your committee ensures these reductions do not negatively impact the funding secured for Recovery Community Centers.

Recovery Community Centers, such as Hills Recovery Center and Larry Labonte Recovery Center, have expressed serious concerns about impending budget shortfalls. The uncertainty surrounding federal funding has left many centers bracing for potential cuts that could jeopardize their ability to provide critical services to individuals in recovery. These looming budget cliffs could lead to reduced programming, staff layoffs, and limited access to life-saving resources, placing additional strain on already vulnerable communities. Compounding these challenges, the funds allocated through LD 1714 have yet to become available to RCCs due to delays in the law's implementation.

I thank you for your time and consideration, and I am available to answer any questions you may have.

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