

132nd Legislature
Senate of
Maine
Senate District 2

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**LD 753, "An Act to Support an
Aroostook Adult Treatment and Recovery Court"**

**Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
March 10, 2025**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

I am Trey Stewart; and I represent Senate District 2, which includes municipalities in Penobscot and Aroostook Counties. I am here today to present LD 753, "An Act to Support an Aroostook Adult Treatment and Recovery Court."

Treatment and recovery courts are currently located in Androscoggin, Cumberland, Hancock, Penobscot, Washington and York Counties and are available for eligible individuals who are in the criminal justice system as a result of substance use disorder. Individuals are voluntarily able to participate in a treatment and recovery court (TRC) after entering into a plea agreement and accepting responsibility for their conduct.

I dare say we all have been impacted by the destruction of substance use disorder with either a family member or a friend. Addiction does not discriminate and tragedy strikes at any moment. Treatment courts are a viable option for people whose addiction has met with trouble and are finally ready to commit to sobriety and a more productive life.

LD 753 provides funding to establish and maintain an adult treatment and recovery court in Aroostook County which, in turn, would provide a more viable option for County residents to participate. Logistically, folks generally must live in the county of the TRC to which they apply. If the participant does not live in the same county, they must be able to travel to meet frequently with their case manager, treatment service providers, law enforcement and attend court. I do not need to tell you that people from northern Aroostook County are almost always not able to participate in the nearest TRC because of the distance. For example, the TRC in Washington County is approximately two hours away from Presque Isle, creating quite a hardship for most.

Some would consider TRCs to be the most successful intervention tools for people with substance and mental health disorders, leading to healthy and stable lives. Treatment providers and offenders work as a team with law enforcement, community supervision, defense, prosecution and the judge to provide support and recovery services. Furthermore, results from

TRCs across the state have shown it makes financial sense compared to prison sentencing, reducing recidivism as well.

Aroostook County is certainly not immune to the opioid crisis. Families have been torn apart and too many lives have been lost. Addiction oftentimes leads to committing crimes. Once in the system, TRCs can be a lifesaving tool. Passage of this measure no doubt will make a significant impact on the lives of offenders who participate in the program. I urge you to be a part of the solution and support this bill.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.