



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Rep. Tavis Hasenfus introducing*  
**LD 1266, Resolve, Directing the Attorney General to Convene a Working  
Group to Propose a Plan for Expanding the Reach of Treatment Courts**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary*

Good morning, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Tavis Hasenfus, and I represent House District 57, which is the communities of Readfield and Winthrop. I am here before you today to introduce **LD 1266, Resolve, Directing the Attorney General to Convene a Working Group to Propose a Plan for Expanding the Reach of Treatment Courts.**

At this year's opioid summit, I participated in a group discussion on the effectiveness of our current treatment court system. I heard firsthand how this model has been able to reduce incarceration rates, relieve the backlogged criminal court docket and, most importantly, save lives and reunite families by addressing the conditions underlying addiction and problem behavior. The insights from that discussion had a lasting impact on me, and I wondered how, as a legislature, we could build on our successes and make a good system even better.

Those conversations served as the basis for the bill before you today.

I stand in strong support of this resolve as drug treatment courts represent a proven, evidence-based approach to combating the devastating effects of substance use disorders while addressing public safety and reducing costs associated with recidivism. Maine, like much of the nation, continues to face profound challenges related to addiction. It is critical that we explore and evaluate the role drug treatment courts play in providing alternatives to traditional criminal justice measures.

Fortunately, Maine has built strong and productive treatment courts across many of its prosecutorial districts. I believe finding a way to grow our treatment courts so that they reach every corner of our state and can serve more individuals is key. Additionally, I hope that we can focus on reducing barriers so that successful clients can get a fresh start and never need to return to the judicial system or have a felony record follow them for life.

While I am not prepared to instruct this committee on the best way to implement more robust and geographically comprehensive treatment courts, I strongly believe that it is a worthy effort for this committee to formally acknowledge the Legislature's interest in this issue. I urge you to direct those individuals and groups with expertise in treatment courts to convene a working group. This group could provide us with a blueprint for making our treatment courts even better than they currently are.

Investing in a study, and subsequent expansion, of drug treatment courts is an investment in the future well-being of our communities. By understanding the potential benefits of this approach and identifying areas for improvement, we can work towards a system that prioritizes treatment over incarceration for individuals struggling with substance use disorder. This will ultimately lead to safer communities, stronger families and a more effective use of taxpayer resources.

I urge this committee to vote 'Ought to Pass' on LD 1266, and I am happy to answer any questions you have of me.

Thank you for your time and consideration.