



**Testimony in Support of LD 1328:
An Act to Create Housing and Recovery Services for LGBTQIA+ Individuals**

May 6, 2025

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing & Economic Development,

My name is Tess Parks. I am the Policy Director of the Maine Recovery Action Project (ME-RAP), a grassroots network of Mainers working on community and public policy based solutions to substance use. I am here today to testify in strong support of LD 1328 on behalf of our statewide team of organizers.

We know that the need for safe and affirmative recovery housing for LGBTQ+ individuals has been persistent and largely unmet. A 2021 MARR focus group of trans and non-binary individuals with SUD found that nearly half of the participants—3 out of 8—could not find a single recovery residence where they felt comfortable¹. So they did not enter recovery housing at all. I'd like to highlight several key findings from the report that underscore the urgent need for recovery housing that is safe for LGBTQ+ individuals in recovery. The report found:

- The intake process can be inappropriate and make participants uncomfortable by, for example, asking questions about clothing, genitals or sexuality.
- Trans women going to male houses and trans men in female houses led to unwanted sexual advances, emasculation, misgendering, depression, sexual assaults, and suicidal ideation.
- Almost all of the people interviewed felt they had to conform to the gender assigned at birth and reported that this took a severe toll on their mental health and their ability to focus on their recovery.

The findings of the MARR Report are unfortunately not surprising. Last summer, we hosted a listening session at the Equality Community Center in Maine to hear directly from LGBTQ+ Mainers with lived experience of SUD. We heard that this group faces inconsistent and exclusionary housing policies across Maine, with varying rules around gender identity that create confusion, discomfort, and harm. There is a clear and pressing need for dedicated queer-affirming recovery housing, along with clear, inclusive policies and training to ensure all housing providers can offer safe, supportive environments.

Ultimately, these types of discriminatory experiences undermine recovery efforts, increase the risk of relapse, and deter individuals from seeking the help they need. To promote long-term recovery, Maine needs recovery housing models explicitly inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ+ identities.

All Mainers deserve access to safe, supportive recovery housing—regardless of who they are or where they live. LD 1328 moves us one step closer.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions.

¹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/IPI_tAzmaXL3xbU3LdB1I-3IlhxFQSOWq/view?usp=sharing