



**Testimony in Support of LD 1973:**

*Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study Oversight and Funding Structures for Recovery Residences and Resident Protections*

May 19, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Committee on HHS,

My name is Tess Parks. I am the Policy Director of Maine Recovery Action Project (ME-RAP). In my past personal experiences, I have lived in a recovery residence, and I have also managed a women's recovery residence in Portland.

In any policy conversation that concerns a vulnerable group of people, it is especially important to hear directly from individuals with lived experience. A member of Maine's recovery community learned about LD 1973 and asked me if I would be willing to share with you her experience below:

I wanted to address the committee regarding the study group to look into the operation, safety and funding of recovery residences in Maine. I am driven to share my experience in the interest of preventing harm from happening to others. I was guided in early recovery to come off of my prescribed psychiatric medication, being told that was preventing me from staying sober and connecting with God. I felt that it was harmful to my recovery experience. I've met a few others in my recovery journey who have had a similar experience.

What I would like to suggest is that the people opening and running these recovery residences be properly licensed and vetted before being allowed to operate and offer medical advice, particularly if they are MARR-certified or receiving state funding. This is a very vulnerable time in an addicted person's life and they're very susceptible to influence. I have chosen to write this anonymously as our community is small and I would prefer not to be singled out.

Her experience highlights the importance of the proposed study commission outlined in LD 1973. Unfortunately, we have also heard from others who have been denied housing due to the use of prescribed medications, or who have been encouraged by non-medical recovery residence staff to discontinue medications critical to their treatment for substance use or mental health disorders. One of the duties of the Commission will be to evaluate and make recommendations with respect to policies governing the use of prescribed medications in recovery residences.

LD 1973 is an opportunity to find where we can strengthen existing resident protections and increase safety for those living in recovery residences. We urge this committee to support this proposed legislation.

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

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