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2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002  
(207) 287-1400  
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

**David Rollins**

76 Ganneston Drive  
Augusta, ME 04330

[David.Rollins@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:David.Rollins@legislature.maine.gov)

May 19, 2025

*Testimony of Rep. Dave Rollins introducing*  
**LD 1973, Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study Oversight  
and Funding Structures for Recovery Residences and Resident  
Protections**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Dave Rollins and I have the honor of representing House District 59, which is half of Augusta. Today, I am here to present **LD 1973, Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study Oversight and Funding Structures for Recovery Residences and Resident Protections**.

This bill did not start out as a study commission. Originally, I intended to introduce legislation that would have mandated certification of recovery residences in Maine by the Maine Association of Recovery Residences, or MARR. But, after receiving significant and thoughtful feedback from individuals across the recovery community, it became clear that this issue is more complex and more contested than any single bill could resolve in a few short weeks.

There is a real split in the recovery community around whether mandatory certification of recovery residences is the right path forward. Some view certification as a critical tool for ensuring safety and accountability. Others question whether certification alone is enough — or whether a licensure model would provide stronger and more enforceable protections. Others would prefer we strengthen the voluntary certification that we have now. Still others point out that MARR's existing policies — including its prohibition on the use of medical cannabis in certified homes — exclude recovery residences that serve people using prescribed medicine that is legal in Maine and, for many, lifesaving.

In this session, we've heard compelling testimony and legislative proposals from Representatives Hasenfus, Warren and others about the growing need to better understand the impact of recovery residences on local communities. In Winthrop, for example, there's rising concern about how these homes affect General Assistance budgets. Representative Hasenfus emphasized the need for more analysis on key factors—such as the size and concentration of recovery residences and their financial impact on municipal assistance programs. Rep. Warren's proposal shed light on the fact that individuals in recovery who live in these residences are not eligible for BRAP—the Bridging Rental Assistance Program—leaving them in a vulnerable position.

We've also heard directly from constituents and community members about deeply troubling practices in some uncertified houses — including reports of people paying rent and being kicked out days later, and even instances of drug dealing occurring inside homes labeled as “recovery residences.” These aren't just administrative problems — they are life-and-death issues that speak to a lack of standards, oversight and consistency in a space that is supposed to be centered on healing.

At the same time, we've heard from people in recovery who were denied housing in certified recovery residences because they were on an FDA-approved and prescribed medication for opioid use disorder.

All of this points to the urgent need for a broader, more inclusive policy conversation about what recovery housing in Maine should look like — and what the appropriate mechanisms for oversight, funding and resident protections should be. We need to step back and ask: What are we trying to achieve with recovery housing? Who is being left out? And how can we create a system that uplifts the good actors while holding bad actors accountable?

Today, MARR has certified 100 recovery residences. While I applaud how far our state has come in terms of expanding access to recovery housing, I do think such rapid growth calls for reflection on where we have been and where we would like to go. I actually feel that it is our ethical duty given that some of our most vulnerable Mainers reside in these homes.

That conversation simply cannot be had in the compressed timeline of this legislative session. That is why I am proposing a summer study commission — a dedicated space where a diverse group of stakeholders, including people with lived experience, service providers, advocates and government officials, can come together to examine the full landscape and report back to the Health and Human Services Committee. This Commission will evaluate oversight models, funding streams, legal protections and national standards — and will help us build a more just, effective and compassionate system of recovery housing in Maine. I remain open to feedback and suggested changes to the membership of the Commission, as outlined in the bill language.

I have heard that there is some concern regarding the proposed report back date of December 2025. I am open to extending the report back date to December 2026 to allow for more time.

I respectfully urge you to support LD 1973, so we can move this conversation forward in a way that's thoughtful, inclusive and responsive to the real experiences of Mainers in recovery and our broader community.

Thank you, and I'm happy to answer any questions. I know there are also a wide range of experts who will be testifying today that can also answer your questions.