

Larry Dansinger
Bangor

May 9, 2021

To members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

I am writing in support of LD 1298, An Act To Provide Funds for Community-based Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Services and To Reduce by Half the Funding for the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency.

I do not believe locking people up benefits public safety. Punishment does not teach a positive lesson. It damages those who are locked up, making them more likely to be charged with (and sometimes commit) other acts considered criminal. It does not provide helpful closure for many who are the victims of crime. It is expensive and takes money away from public health and other programs that can more effectively address public safety needs such as mental health support, substance use disorder programs, poverty alleviation, and insuring adequate health care and economic security, among others.

LD 1298 transfers money out of an agency where it does not belong, law enforcement, and puts it where it can benefit our state, with public health programs that address substance use disorder issues.

Locking people up who have substance use disorder does little or nothing to address that problem, and it can cause overdose and death. Treating SUD with public health programs provides a much more effective way to dealing with most individuals' SUD conditions.

Please vote ought to pass on LD 1298. This bill would increase public safety by keeping them out of jail and instead getting them into public health programs where they can more effectively manage their substance use.

Sincerely,

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