

Jeanne Marquis
China

Testimony for LD1588
May13, 2021

Good day, distinguished Committee members. I am Jeanne Marquis from China, Maine. I encourage you to support Representative William Pluecker's bill, LD1588, to replace stigmatizing references throughout the Maine revised statutes and government publications.

Words are powerful. They may seem inconsequential, but words reveal biases that may change how a person is treated by others and how they view themselves. Words do have consequences, so I urge your committee to support LD1588 to review the language used to discuss people with substance use disorder.

Many of us in Maine have family members in recovery. My family member has struggled with medication-resistant, meaning that the typically prescribed antidepressants have no or very little effect. Late in his teen years, he found relief with street drugs. From what I have researched, this is a very common scenario because 30 percent of those with chronic depression find little or no relief from prescribed medications. He is now in recovery and being treated for his depression with more progressive therapies.

We now know that substance use disorder is an illness of the brain. These individuals need to be treated with respect not with words that denote lack of morals or character. The stigma of those words keep people from getting the treatments they desperately need, keep them from employment, renting apartments and pursuing further education.

Updating the language may seem like a little thing, but it will change the way our state institutions treat people and make policy, not based on outdated thinking but on evidenced-based science. Please pass LD1588 and move us ahead.

Jeanne Marquis,
207-649-3836
JmnMarquis@gmail.com
PO Box 6291, China, Maine 04926