

January 30, 2023



Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

My name is Jake Kulaw and I am testifying on behalf of MUUSAN (Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network) to oppose LD 109, “An act to Improve Safety for Individuals Living in Recovery Residences.” The first principle of Unitarian Universalism is the inherent worth and dignity of every person. This includes people in recovery. Our faith is one that stands for justice, equity and compassion in human interaction. The effect of LD 109 would be precisely the opposite. We are standing in solidarity with the many organizations who oppose this bill such as the Maine Association of Recovery Residences, Portland Community Recovery Center, and the Recovery Advocacy Project of Maine, whose mission is to protect and advance the interests of the vulnerable Maine residents protected by the current law that LD 109 would repeal.

The current law as LD 353 passed unanimously in both chambers of the 129th legislature and was signed by Governor Mills. Nothing has happened since that time that would suggest they were *all* mistaken.

This bill could lead to the closure of recovery houses across Maine. This would have a devastating effect on people who are seeking help and support on the road to recovery. We are in the middle of the worst housing crisis in Maine’s history and see only continued increases in overdose deaths: We cannot afford to lose a single housing bed, especially recovery housing beds!

I want to thank you all for being here today and for all of the work that you are doing and will continue to do. We know that helping people in recovery is something all of you care about. On behalf of MUUSAN, we ask that you vote Ought Not To Pass on LD 109, “An Act to Improve Safety for Individuals Living in Recovery Residences.”

Sincerely,

Jake Kulaw