

1/30/2023

## Testimony in opposition to LD 109

Good morning Senator Bee-Bee Center, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Nick Loscocco and I currently reside in New Gloucester, Maine. I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 109.

I am a person in long term recovery. For me this means that I have not used drugs or alcohol for over 9 years. Like so many others in the recovery community, my journey began in a recovery residence in Massachusetts over 9 years ago. As a person who had just been released from incarceration, a recovery home offered me immediate respite and a safe space to recover at a time when I was not welcome in many other places.

Throughout the nearly 3 years that I lived in that residence, I came to develop special bonds with my peers in the house. We argued, we laughed, we yelled, we mourned when we lost loved ones, and celebrated when we accomplished goals. We experienced all the same trials, emotions, love, and support that anyone in a traditional family might experience. Over time our bonds blossomed into true friendships which for most of us held the same weight as familial relationships. At a period in my life when the recent years of my active addiction had severely strained my connections with relatives, I came to view and appreciate many of the men in the house as my new family, my recovery family.

After a year and a half as a successful and valued resident, I was offered the opportunity to step into a resident house manager position. At the time I was just happy to take on this added responsibility and to be available as a support for any new men entering the house. I had no idea that it would propel me into a career path to which I have since dedicated my life. After another year in the program as house manager I moved out on my own and was blessed with the opportunity to take a full-time job as the case manager for that program.

The structure, support, and comradery of the recovery residence had given me the time I needed to build a solid foundation upon which I would venture into the world as a productive member of my community. While working at the program I was able to return to college where I earned a bachelor's degree from Framingham State University and a certificate in addictions counseling from the University of Massachusetts. In 2019, 5 years into recovery, I was invited to sit on the steering committee of the coalition responsible for the SAMHSA Drug Free Communities grant in my home town. In 2021 I earned our town's Community Champion Award for my work as a member of that coalition.

Upon moving to Maine in May of 2022, I immediately began connecting with what has become my new recovery family in this community. I attend 12-step meetings for my personal recovery, I volunteer with the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project, and I work for a local organization as a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor.

In my service to my new community here in Maine I continue to see first-hand the desperate need for additional housing and recovery resources throughout the state. At a time when more of us are losing our lives to substance use than ever before, I believe it is this government's responsibility to work towards making resources more plentiful, and lowering barriers to existing resources. LD 109 does

the opposite of this by re-raising a barrier that the 129<sup>th</sup> legislature acted correctly in lowering. I respectfully urge you as someone who does this work and lives my life as a proud member of the recovery community to stand with me in opposition to LD 109.

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to be heard in front of this committee, and I humbly thank you for your time and public service. I am open to any questions the committee members may have for me.

Thank you,

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