

Submitted Written Testimony:

Testimony in Opposition to LD 109 “An Act to Improve Safety for Individuals Living in Recovery Residences”

January 30, 2023

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

My name is Astara Zuorski, I am a resident of Rockport, and I am sharing my testimony in opposition to LD 109. Recovery housing is more critical than ever as overdose deaths continue to increase in Maine. And in the middle of a housing crisis impacting most Maine residents, we must ensure recovery housing is accessible to our most vulnerable residents.

As a Maine resident and a former behavior specialist teacher for some of our most marginalized local citizens, I am very familiar with how incredibly difficult it is to find affordable housing and intensive recovery support in Maine. And as a recovering addict myself, I know that stable housing, a supportive community, and spaces dedicated to keep recovering addicts safe and protected are three components that allow for effective recovery (and therefore reduce the number of drug-related deaths in Maine).

While LD 109 mentions improving safety for individuals living in recovery residences, LD 109 repeals a fundamental law for MARR-certified recovery residences (LD 353), the law that allows them to be considered single-family residences for the purposes of fire safety requirements. Repealing the current law would mean that, due to the extremely high costs of installing fire sprinkler systems (in order to meet LD 109), rent would increase and become unaffordable to Maine residents and many certified recovery residences will have to close. In addition, repealing LD 353 (a law that was unanimously passed with testimony from the Assistant State Fire Marshall and Maine State Attorney General’s Office) would likely violate the Fair Housing and the Americans with Disabilities Act. As a state that is already suffering from increased deaths related to addiction, we must protect fair housing for our Maine residents in recovery.

I cannot urge you enough to reconsider the severe consequences that LD 109 would place upon Maine residents in recovery. Thank you already for all the work you have done, and continue to do to support Maine residents and ensure public safety in our state. In this case, opposing LD 109 would equate to fair and accessible housing, which provides safety for so many in need. I ask you to please join me in opposition of LD 109 “An Act to Improve Safety for Individuals Living in Recovery Residences” to protect our Maine residents in recovery.

Sincerely,
Astara Zuorski
astarazuorski@gmail.com

Astara Zuorski
Rockport
LD 109

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