

L.D 343 “An Act To Set Aside Funds from Federal Block Grants for Certain Communities”

Good Morning Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Erika Farnlof and I live in Pembroke, Maine. I am speaking in support of L.D. 343 an act to set aside 12% of funds from all the federal block grants received by the Department of Health and Human Services and the State of Maine, for the tribal communities within our state.

I am testifying today as an Indigenous woman in long term recovery. In my experience and in my work, I have seen first-hand how hard hit our tribal communities have been by addiction and lack of recovery resources that support both the healing of our individual tribal members that live with Substance Use Disorder and the communities as a whole. The tribal communities of Maine have struggled to provide and maintain services deeply needed to address our generational disparities associated with substances. Resources from block grant funding intended to address substance use disorder in Maine’s most vulnerable communities must include an allocation to our Tribal nations.

The Tribes and their public health infrastructure have struggled to maintain continuous and reliable services to address substance use disorder within our communities. A mandatory set aside from all Federal Block Grants received by Maine DHHS would support tribal communities’ investment in prevention and treatment programs.

My personal journey in recovery, amply demonstrates that the path to recovery is not direct. It is costly both in health and wellness and relationships. Even Programs that are well conceived and executed are always in need of funds. This allocation of Maine DHHS Federal Block Grants would allow us to deepen our programs and have a reliable stream of income.

I am grateful for this opportunity to testify today and thank you for all of the important work that you do to advance the health and wellness for all of our communities in Maine.

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