

Dear Senator Maxmin, Speaker Fectau, Rep Evans, Rep. Landy, Rep. McDonald, Rep. Meyer, Rep. O'neil, Rep. Poirier, and Membesr of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Colleen Keegan. I am a resident of Kennebunk and a graduate student at the University of Maine studying social work. I am an advocate for substance use recovery in my community. I have seen first-hand through my continuous studies and community involvement the impact substance use disorders have on our state. I have dedicated my studies in my master's program to substance use disorder and treatment, and I am also a part of the professional opioid workforce response program at the university. I am writing this letter to make sure our state receives the much-needed funding for community recovery centers that it deserves.

I am in favor of *LD 488: A Resolve To Expand Community Organizations Throughout Maine*. COVID-19 has been at the forefront of public health for the last year but we can not forget about the original pandemic: problematic substance use and preventable overdoses. Overdose rates in the state of Maine increased 25% during the pandemic, marking the deadliest year on record with Maine losing 502 people. These deaths are preventable and are a renewed call for evidence-based investments by our government.

I see people every day in my community struggling with substance use, with no resources or community support to help them. Without the proper guidance, tackling addiction seems like an impossible task. Recovery Community Centers (RCO's) provide a safe peer-led recovery space that helps support positive recovery outcomes. This peer-led recovery model is evidence-based and has helped support positive recovery outcomes. A large component of this model of recovery is giving a safe space and supportive recovery community.

Please listen to not only my community but the state's need for this funding. I urge you to vote in favor *To Expand Community Organizations Throughout Maine* and allow the expansions of the imperative services RCO's provide throughout the state of Maine.

Sincerely,
Colleen Keegan
MSW Student
York County Resident