



May 21st, 2021

Good morning Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Courtney Allen. I am the Policy Director of the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project. I am here today to testify in favor of [LD 1722](#): An Act To Ensure Access to All Paths to Recovery for Persons Affected by Opioids Using Money Obtained through Litigation against Opioid Manufacturers as amended by Representative Warren on behalf of our network. Our community includes people in recovery, people who use drugs, family members, and our allies across the state.

This bill seeks to ensure that the recovery community has a seat at the table as decisions are made on how to spend opioid litigation funds in our state. This could not be more important to our community, as we are the people who have endured the most harm at the hands of opioid prescribers and therefore should be included in the conversations about how to best spend that money. Time and time again our community has been left out of the policy decisions that directly impact us. We ask your committee to ensure that does not happen again.

We do hope that the Attorney General will consider non-traditional voices from our communities and seek to include a diverse representation of the recovery community as appointments are made. Non-traditional voices may be people who have never served on a commission or who identifies as a person who uses drugs, among others. We believe that the collective responsibility of recovery advocacy and service to our movement should be delegated throughout it and not on the shoulders of a few advocates.

We also believe that the opioid settlement funds should be overseen by a separate entity than the Substance Use Disorder Commission. The recovery community is a diverse community and therefore we should always try to include as many of their voices as possible. This Commission also seeks to expand representation of voices that are not represented on the SUD Commission. These additional voices include:



- The Attorney General, who has been directly involved in securing these funds, or his designee;
- The Commissioner of Health and Human Services or a designee;
- The Director of Opioid Response or designee;
- A member who represents families impacted by the opioid and substance use crisis;
- A member representing reentry supports for currently and formerly incarcerated individuals and their families;
- A member representing pretrial services;
- Two members representing municipalities impacted by the opioid and substance use crisis;

And we recommend that a few additional appointees be added (as outlined by Representative Warren in her amendment), to include:

- A member representing harm reduction services;
- Three members at large representing geographically diverse areas not currently represented on the commission

We also ask your committee to refrain from holding this bill over to the next session and to act now. Some of the opioid settlement money is already available in the state and other monies will be coming soon. We worry that if you wait till the second session that the money could be spent without the input of this diverse stakeholder group. We ask that you protect this money now by voting ought to pass as amended.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,  
Courtney Allen  
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