

Dear Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Matthew Gunn, a resident in Portland and a member of the recovery community. My journey into recovery was not traditional. That said it has allowed me to graduate from college, work for a local utility and volunteer in my community. I'm here today in favor of LD1722, an act to ensure access to all paths to recovery for persons affected by opioids using money obtained through litigation against opioid manufacturers

The opioid crisis has impacted tens of millions of families across the country, including my own. As money from settlements comes to Maine it's imperative to determine how those funds will be used. Working in the public sector I have seen how funds collected for one purpose can be redirected to another. Water and sewer taxes have been redirected year after year leaving infrastructure in disrepair. Unless the State creates a fund for money received from opioid litigation, funds will likely be appropriated elsewhere. People with substance use disorder (SUD) have been affected by the widespread distribution of opioids and it should be people with SUD who benefit from litigation against distributors.

These settlements represent a once in a lifetime opportunity to improve the treatment and recovery systems for those suffering from OUD and other substance use disorders and mental health disorders. It is vital for public health and safety that all money received by the State as a result of lawsuits related to opioid distributors used to help remediate and abate the opioid and substance use crisis, and that efforts go toward supporting all paths to recovery through prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Matthew Gunn

mattgunn85@gmail.com
830 Washington Ave
Portland, ME, 04013

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Portland

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