23 June 2017

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 1376, “An Act To Remove Barriers to Workforce Development in Alcohol and Drug Counseling and To Increase the MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for Certain Counselors.”

National standards for substance-abuse treatment licensing is currently set by the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC), which is the nationally recognized resource for prevention, substance-use disorder treatment and recovery credentialing.

The Maine State Board of Alcohol and Drug Counselors has strict standards regarding licensure. There are educational standards, clinical supervision standards and professional education standards in place to ensure that practicing clinicians maintain a certain level of competency. These standards are also considered by the IC&RC as best-practice standards for the field.

Maine has a better-than-average test passing rate as compared to other states. The test-passing rate for LADCs is at 73 percent, compared to a national passing rate of 60 percent, and the CADC passing rate is 79 percent compared to a national rate of 73 percent (IC&RC; International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium).

This state does significant work to ensure our standards are high and the quality of our counselors is excellent. This bill has the potential to significantly decrease the competency of our treatment providers. Lowering the standards and quality for substance-abuse treatment professionals is not the right approach to addressing the drug crisis that is on our streets. More than ever, we need the best counselors possible to help Mainer’s break the chains of addiction.

For this reason, I return LD 1376 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor