



Consumer Council System of Maine
A Voice for Consumers of Mental Health Services

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Good afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Baldacci and Representative Myer and esteemed members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee and Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Simonne Maline, I am the Executive Director of the Consumer Council System of Maine, and I am here today to testify **in support of LD 258; GOV. MILLS' PROPOSED BIENNIAL BUDGET 131st Maine Legislature**

The Consumer Council System of Maine is a public instrumentality written into State Statute by the Maine Legislature to serve in an advisory capacity and to provide Maine Legislators and State Government with guidance and advice regarding the delivery of effective and appropriate adult mental health services from those served by them.

We support the significant investment in Maine's behavioral health system. We don't consider ourselves the experts on rates for services but do feel confident in sharing with you there is a serious problem in the core infrastructure of Maine's mental health system. We know that there are many efforts underway to rebuild services and they cannot come into being fast enough based on what people share with us around lack of access to services in their communities.

We would love to see more robust peer support initiatives coming into being as well. We used to lead the nation and now we are far behind. From 2002-2017 we had a peer respite program in Maine, located in Brunswick. That program closed due to flat funding and while there have been many ways we have asked for this program to be restored and built upon, it has not. We hope this is the year you will set aside those funds by supporting **LD 540 An Act to Establish Peer Respite Centers for Adults with Mental Health Challenges in Maine**.

We thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts and look forward to working on these vitally important issues with the Legislature and other interested parties soon.

In closing, I urge you to take into consideration the voice and experiences of mental consumers (the customers) in Maine.

Thank you for your time,

Simonne M Maline