

Larry Dansinger
Bangor
LD 540

To members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am writing in support of LD 540, "An Act to Establish Peer Respite Centers for Adults with Mental Health Challenges in Maine."

An extremely effective way to support individuals dealing with mental health issues is for them to get support from, to work with, and to mentor, others with mental health issues, whether the same kind of problem or even something different. Twelve step groups could be an example of a method that can be very helpful to those struggling with their mental health. The Consumer Council System of Maine also provides peer relationships that have benefited the mental health of many Maine people.

A respite facility can especially help those who may need more intensive support in addressing their own mental health struggles. I expect such respite centers are operating in other parts of our country.

Because such centers can address the causes of mental health problems and help those who experience those problems to heal, it is an effort, whether experimental or not, that is very much worth doing and worth the money appropriated for it. If successful, it can be a model for other mental health programs in Maine.

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