

Joe Pickering
Bangor
LD 328

Dear Senator Joseph Baldacci Senate Chair and Michelle Meyer House Chair and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

I totally support Senator Stewart's LD 328 An Act to improve "Mental Health" in Maine. I understand it is a bill to direct DHHS to Maine Care rules (sec. 17) May the Health and Human Services Committee please pass it unanimously so that it can have the best chance to pass our state legislature.

I was a former Executive Director of a Community Health organization for over 30 years in Maine. Much more importantly I was the father of my late son Christopher Pickering who had a serious brain disorder, (schizophrenia) Living with Chris with his severe schizophrenia was a 26 year "education." I learned what certain serious brain disorders were and it was well beyond the outdated and discriminatory terms "mental illness" and "physical illness." Our human body is one integrated, interactive system from head to toe.

I realize this bill is no longer a "concept bill" but along with passing LD 328, I only hope that someone on this committee will at least next year sponsor a bill to evaluate and propose changes to the outdated and discriminatory words and terms that our society and our federal and state use to wrongly label our various illnesses and disorders particularly related to certain serious brain disorders. I have learned from working and advocating for over 50 years in three states: Massachusetts, Maine and Washington state how the illness or disorder determines how our government funds the services and funds the research. This cruel nonsense tragically often leads to deaths. How can Maine make a national and even a international difference? You our Maine Leaders can LIVE OUR STATE MOTTO TO LEAD and be national leaders and improve "mental health." by recognizing it is health period!!

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