

Jayne Whiteside
Augusta
LD 2237

Wednesday March 6, 2024

Hello Senators, Representatives and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Jayne Whiteside, I am a resident of Augusta and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 2237 regarding Improving Violence Prevention Resources in Maine.

I am a registered/licensed dietitian as well as a SERV safe Instructor/Proctor. I also have degrees in mental health and human services as well as library services. I did internships through the University of Maine at Augusta at the Mid Maine Homeless Shelter in Waterville as well as the Waterville Public Library. I appreciate the work that the Consumer Council System of Maine has done regarding helping to promote a better system of mobile access, medication management, and the proposed receiving centers.

I see a main cause of violence that continues to not be addressed is the accurate reporting of school bullying by school systems in Maine. I was voted the quietest in my high school class at Cony High School in Augusta and was tormented by students (and some teachers). I see nothing to promote the esteem of those who are quiet or from a lower economic class on this school system's Facebook page. There should be a review of class superlative designations in schools- very stigmatizing. This is where the seeds of violence take hold.

Also, in the restaurant sphere there are many fast- food chain restaurants that get regular visits from police because of out-of-control customers and staff including management and owners. This includes robberies. Sometimes these incidents are shown on media like Facebook and TikTok. The information on these incidents should be collected and reviewed on a state-wide level including participation by stakeholders. The City of Augusta does a good job posting a daily media log regarding calls/incidents/arrests. This would improve order in this economic sector.

Finally, recently a restaurant owner in Auburn incredibly was arrested for having drugs and guns in his restaurant. What about the employees? What about the customers? Definitely a food safety risk due to drug residue. This has happened in fast-food restaurants, too and I am aware of a murder at a fast-food restaurant in the distant past in Presque Isle. Penalties regarding drug dealing need to be reviewed, especially those who work in the restaurant industry. This economic sector shouldn't be a safe haven for these workers.

In closing I urge you to pass LD 2237.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jayne Whiteside Augusta