

Mary Ellen Quinn
WINTERPORT
LD 496

Sen. Pinney Beebe-Center and honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee: My Name is Mary Ellen Quinn. I live in Winterport and am a Psychiatric Social Worker, currently retired after 38 years working in Community Mental Health services in Bangor. I am testifying today in strong support of LD 496, An Act Regarding the Time Frame for Issuing a Silver Alert and to Require Silver Alerts for All Persons Missing from Certain Inpatient Facilities.

Having worked my entire career with adults who have psychiatric illness, I concur that Maine should have an immediate and thorough response when such persons are missing. Persons who are diagnosed with Major Mental Illness such as Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, PTSD, OCD, and Panic Disorder often experience acute hallucinations and delusions in addition to severe paranoia and panic attacks. These symptoms render them as extremely vulnerable when away from necessary treatment and supports. Silver Alerts issued immediately to the public and to agencies potentially serving these persons will make their status known and dramatically increase the likelihood of their identification and return to safety. This measure is protective of the vulnerable person and provides a huge support to their family members. I urge you to pass LD 496. Thank you for your time and attention to this life saving matter.