



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

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April 2, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and esteemed members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

My name is Simonne Maline. I am the Executive Director for the Consumer Council System of Maine (CCSM). I am here today on behalf of the CCSM to testify **in support of LD 993**.

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 legislators with guidance and advice regarding the delivery of effective and appropriate adult mental health services from those served by them.

Maine is in the process of a needed reformation of its crisis system, prioritizing trauma-informed care that ensures individuals experiencing a mental health crisis receive the appropriate support. This reform represents a critical shift away from criminal justice involvement toward a person-centered approach. We want to extend gratitude to the first responders who have continuously and graciously provided care to those in crisis prior to this system reform. CCSM understands the psychological toll and emotional fatigue that is associated with responding to traumatic situations and believes this training would provide necessary support for first responders.

The development of peer-led crisis services is vital; yet first responders will continue to often be the first touch for individuals in crisis. Ensuring these first responders receive thorough and meaningful mental health crisis training is an essential step in reducing unnecessary use of force, promoting de-escalation, and fostering connections to appropriate services. By including training on stress recognition and coping strategies, LD 993 acknowledges the importance of first responder well-being in maintaining a healthy and effective emergency response system.

CCSM believes that a trauma-informed co-response team is key to an effective crisis response system. While we continue to advocate for expanded co-response teams, we recognize the necessity of comprehensive mental health training for first responders, who will inevitably encounter individuals in crisis. We urge the committee to **vote ought to pass on LD 993** to equip Maine's first responders with the training needed to support individuals facing mental health challenges with compassion and respect while also ensuring they have access to the necessary support for managing stress and trauma.

Sincerely,



Simonne M. Maline

Executive Director

Resources:

[Mental Health Treatment for First Responders- https://psycnet.apa.org/fulltext/2024-41581-001.pdf](https://psycnet.apa.org/fulltext/2024-41581-001.pdf)

[Re-examining Mental Health Crisis Intervention-
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1111/hsc.13731](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1111/hsc.13731)

[Police Officers' Attitudes Toward Mental Health and Crisis Intervention- https://bit.ly/42g02sO](https://bit.ly/42g02sO)