

April 23, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Cheryl Houston, I am a resident of Vernon, CT. and I am here today to testify **in favor of LD 1377: “Resolve, to Convene a Working Group to Evaluate Potential Regulation of the Vehicle Towing Industry and the Impact on State Agencies and Industries.”** . I also would like to refer to a previous bill, LD 831: **“An Act Regarding Abandoned Vehicles Due to Involuntary Psychiatric Hospitalization.”** , in that I fully support it being moved into **LD 1377**.

The following incident happened to my daughter when she was driving through Wells, Maine. It is unfortunate that when a person who has a diagnosis becomes manic, even if it is unintentionally self-inflicted, the consequences, when hospitalization happens, starts a domino effect that shatters lives.

It starts almost innocently; the person gets pulled over. The officer sees that there may be more to the situation than a ticket. Instead, and with a ticket, the person is taken to the hospital emergency room. The person gets assessed. Then, the person gets put on a mandatory hold for psychiatric care.

Already, the initial incident has begun to morph into a branch. Three things have begun to happen, they have a ticket with a deadline to pay or respond to, their car is more than likely towed and gone forever, and they are confused and can't understand that they need to call their loved one.

As well-intentioned doctors and nurses, I hope, try to find the right cocktail to help the person, days may turn into weeks.

Time here, in this place to fix you, is not your friend. Each day another branch or twig is sprouted. Today the new connection is the car note. The payment didn't come out. In a week, it will be the insurance.

They are still trying to adjust your medications, but now you feel a little better. It has been more than a month. In your inbox, which you have no access to, there are many notices. One says your light bill is past due and there is a shut off notice.

When you can reach out and can advocate for yourself, it is already a long road, just to try to get back to a somewhat even place.

By the time you can understand what is happening, it is too late for some things. The tow bill is beyond your grasp and ability to pay, but, even if it wasn't, the tow place has already filed with the SA for abandoned vehicle. Even if you have people in touch with the tow place, they will not release the car to them. It starts a spiral. How can you work, how do you get to the doctors, how do you make all your appointments when there is no other means of transportation available to you?

In closing, I would like to say, the lack of access to transportation creates barriers in the way of anyone who is need of mental health care and can greatly hinder a person's

recovery journey. Therefore, I strongly urge you to vote **“Ought to Pass”** on **LD. 1377** with the inclusion of **LD. 831**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely.

Cheryl Houston,  
Vernon, Connecticut