

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Stacy Cyr and I live in Sabattus. I am writing to testify in support of LD 1425, An Act to Improve Access to Sustainable and Low-barrier Trauma Recovery Services.

I was at Just in Time Bowling Alley on October 25 with Mike Deslauriers, my longtime partner of 10 years, his best friend, Jason Walker and Jason's wife, Kathi.

As we prepared to start our third game, we all heard a loud pop. It was almost like a balloon popping, but so much louder. My first thought was that there was an incident in the kitchen or an equipment malfunction. It took a few seconds to realize that it was NOT either of those. It was a man, standing in the bowling alley with a large gun. I remember thinking that the whole thing was some kind of prank. It could not be real.

We were bowling in the lane that was closest to the door where he entered the building.

Mike and Jason yelled to Kathi & I to get down and they both charged in the direction of the gunman. I am not sure how they had the courage to go after him but that is the type of people they were. They always protected their friends and family; and on that night they tried to protect complete strangers. I cannot even imagine how many more lives would have been lost if they had not attempted to unarm him. That time allowed so many to exit the building or find shelter.

I was hiding under a table and could see the gunman continuing to fire. There was smoke coming from the barrel and a green light coming from the end of the gun. I realized then that this was real. I do not think I will ever be able to explain the fear that I felt in that moment. I was completely frozen. I sat there waiting for my turn to be shot.

I am not sure how many shots he fired, but it seemed to go on forever. We later learned that he was only in the building for 48 seconds. It felt like an eternity.

When the gunman walked out the front door, one of the owners locked the door behind him. Kathi and I both got up from our hiding places.

I could see Mike lying on his back with his feet in my direction. I could only see that there was blood on his shoulder. I saw Jason laying with blood on his face.

There were two people on the ground near the table where I had been hiding. The man was shot in the head. I will never get that image out of my mind. Moments before the shooting occurred I was laughing with these people laying on the ground about a little boy they were coaching because he was dancing after his turn.

No one should ever have to see what I saw or feel what I felt that night.

Kathi and I followed the others that were still in the bowling alley to exit the building. While heading down the aisle to the back of the lanes there were trails of blood. When we got behind the lanes, I saw a man leaning against the wall covered in blood. He was shot multiple times but was still alive. Someone was asking for belts to use as tourniquets for him and a child that had also been shot.

By the time we made it out of the back door of the bowling alley, the police were arriving. We had no idea where the gunman was, so being outside with no cover was terrifying. The police had us run across the street to another parking lot where we waited for hours.

Kathi and I began to call our families and had to explain to them that Mike and Jason had been shot at the bowling alley, but we had no idea if they were ok or not. Mike's daughter, Abby is a first year teacher. She had parent teacher conferences that night. I called her over and over again. When she called me back, I had to give the phone to Kathi. I could not tell her that her dad had been shot.

We waited and waited to learn if Mike was alive. Initially, we were assured that Mike and Jason were at Central Maine Medical Center. Then we were told they had never been there. Our family called every hospital in Maine, and major hospitals in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. No one was able to confirm if Mike and Jason were there.

That night and into the early morning hours I still had no answers about Mike. I kept calling Mike's phone, hoping he would answer. He did not. Still, I waited and I hoped. Late in the morning on October 26, a black car pulled into my driveway and before the two detectives got out, I knew that Mike was gone. That was the worst moment of my life.

In the days after we were notified, I couldn't eat or sleep. I could not be alone. Every moment of every day was filled with a fear I had never felt before. Even after we were notified that Robert Card had been found, that fear did not go away.

I am not sure where I would be without the support of the Maine Resiliency Center. For a long time, it was my only safe space. Being around people who had the same experience as me and were struggling like I was brought me some comfort. I did not have to struggle alone.

The support groups gave me an outlet to speak about what I saw and how I was feeling without having to burden my family and friends. We learned coping skills. We developed a bond that will never be broken. The events that the MRC plans give us a chance to feel normal. We are able to laugh, have fun and connect in a safe place. They make sure that we are informed of any media releases that could be triggering for us.

I need the Resiliency Center to continue healing. I truly believe that expanding services to others who have experienced tragic events would be beneficial to the community. It would allow others who have been through horrific tragedy or trauma in their own lives to have a place to learn skills, connect with others who have experienced similar things, and learn how to move forward as best as they can. For these reasons, I urge you to vote for LD 1425.