

Kathleen Walker  
Sabattus  
LD 1425

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Kathleen Walker, and I live in Sabattus ME. I am writing to provide testimony in support of LD1425, an Act to Improve Access to Sustainable and Low-Barrier Trauma Recovery Services.

The Maine Resiliency Center has been a haven to myself and many others following the tragic events of 10/25/23. On this day I lost my husband Jason Walker, and his best friend Michael Deslauriers II when they charged Robert Card at Just in Time in an effort to take him down. I survived the event and am here today because of their efforts to protect our safety and by the grace of God.

The MRC has played an integral role in my ability to be resilient and persevere since I began going in January 2024. The staff there are trauma informed and go to great lengths to ensure their programming and personnel support an environment that does not re-traumatize victims and survivors.

I have taken advantage of their “those present” support groups. This was really the most valuable offering and connected me with others who lived through this experience. It was helpful to hear other renditions of the night’s events and for us to support one another each week as we navigated our new lives as survivors of this horror.

The MRCs role in commemorative events, dinners for survivors and family and the connection of the center to resources looking to support those impacted were really pivotal in the early healing process. I also recognize that this is just a small piece of the outreach they have and the support they provide when I am not present. The connection to providers who can support EMT personnel, first responders, police and such have extended their reach to a much broader, deeply impacted, community.

Additionally, it resonates with me that there is also a nineteenth family greatly impacted by these events. The Card family did not ask for this and yet they also are experiencing the fallout of such tragedy and loss while also feeling like the available resources “aren’t for them”. It is my great hope that the MRC has quietly and professionally navigated support for them concurrent with the rest of us in the public eye.

While the landscape and need for support has morphed over the course of the last 18 months, there is STILL a need. Some folks are only now coming out from the fog of grief and trauma and are now awakened to a need for support. Their recent event for first responders that had over 200 attendees is a strong testament for THIS ISN’T OVER. We still need the MRC, they still have a role, they need to continue.

For folks like me, I have said from the beginning that my husband did not die for me not to live. That is what I do every day, I am trying to live a new life, and-when possible, keep this tragedy in the rearview. When I am doing well, the center is there for me. When I am not doing well, the center is there for me. The staff and other impacted survivors have become like family.

We are never going to be “over” this. We may get “through” this, and we do that with the help of MRC.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote to support LD 1425. The MRC, people of Maine, and those impacted by the events of 10/25/23, deserve to continue to have the support of their state.

Sincerely,  
Kathleen Walker