

May 9, 2025

Good Morning Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Vickie Morgan, I am a resident of Norway and I am here today to testify **in support of LD 1843 “An Act to Provide Peer Respite Centers for Individuals with Mental Health Needs”**.

In Maine, a Peer Respite Center was available from 2002 to 2017. At that time, the organization operating the program chose to not renew their contract.

Peer Respite is a voluntary program that operates 24/7. It is staffed by Peer Support Specialist, who have lived experience with mental health issues. It provides another option for the individual, but it does not replace traditional clinical services, such as, a psychiatric hospital or crisis stabilization unit.

For a person like me who refuses to ever go to the emergency department or psychiatric hospital for mental health issues, due the trauma that I have experience in these settings, it would provide a safe place for me to receive the help that I need.

Peer Respite would free up staff in the emergency department and allow them to take care of the more critically ill patients and provide room in psychiatric hospitals for the individuals that need that level of care.

This program also cost significantly less than emergency departments and psychiatric hospitals and is often more effective.

In closing, I urge you to vote **ought to pass LD 1843**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vickie Morgan

Vickie Morgan
Norway