

TO: Senator Tipping, Representative Mastraccio, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor

FROM: Tanya Nadeau, Community Response Worker DATE: January 20, 2026

RE: Support for LD 2067: An Act to Include Certain Community Mental Health Workers Under the 1998 Special Plan

Senator Tipping, Representative Mastraccio, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Tanya Nadeau. For the last six years, I have worked as a Community Response Worker on our crisis team. I am writing to urge you to support LD 2067.

Our work is not standard healthcare; it is frontline emergency response. For most of my tenure, our team has operated with chronic vacancies, requiring the rest of us to cover shifts 24/7. During the pandemic, while others worked remotely, we “cold knocked” on doors to ensure clients had medical care and supplies. We are the stopgap for a strained system—managing crises to keep people out of ERs, navigating housing shortages when Section 8 funding fails, and de-escalating dangerous behaviors when no other resources exist.

Community Response Workers must be mentally and physically ready to respond immediately to high-risk situations, ranging from suicidal ideation to physical aggression with intent to do grave harm. Local authorities rely on our specific training to manage these scenes.

To illustrate the reality of this work: I recently responded to a late-night crisis involving two clients locked out of their home by one client’s father, and a third client inside that wasn’t supposed to be there. I arrived expecting a simple mediation but found myself managing two police officers, two ambulance crewmen, an escalated parent, several clients receiving disability services, one was a volatile individual threatening life and limb—all while discovering my primary client was four months pregnant. The police officers on scene looked to me for guidance, stating plainly: “We call you guys because there is no point in taking them to the jail... they don’t have the resources and they have been banned from the shelters.”

It was up to me—alone, without administrative support—to secure the scene. This is just one of hundreds of similar situations we handle annually.

Being a Community Response Worker means putting the safety of others before our own families. Working a 24/7 rotating schedule in a small community means we are never truly “off.” I have had clients contact my children because they recognized them in public. The stress affects everything from grocery shopping to school functions. This constant state of vigilance is taxing mentally, physically, and emotionally.

I have watched colleagues leave because the trauma of the job destroyed their personal lives and health. These are dedicated professionals who lose the ability to care for themselves after just a few years. It is unrealistic to expect people to sustain this level of high-stakes performance for a full career without the specific protection and recognition provided by the 1998 Special Plan.

We function as first responders for the mental health community. Please pass LD 2067 to recognize the reality of our service.

Respectfully,

Tanya Nadeau