

From: joepick@aol.com,  
To: joepick@aol.com,  
Subject: Re: TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF LD 445 JOE H. PICKERING JR.  
Date: Tue, Mar 14, 2023 5:26 pm

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## TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF LD 445

CHAIRPERSONS BALDACCI AND MYER AND OTHER DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE, THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY. MY NAME IS JOE H. PICKERING JR. IN THE MAINE SUNDAY TELEGRAM MY LETTER APPEARED WITH THE BYLINE: THERE IS A CURE FOR CROWDED HOSPITALS. LD 445 IS THAT CURE. IT CAN BRING MUCH MORE THAN PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT SERVICES SUCH AS COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR EXAMPLE PROGRESSIVE TREATMENT SERVICES. MAINE WILL RECIEVE FEDERAL FUNDS FOR THESE VARIOUS SERVICES.

PLEASE READ AND HEED THE MESSAGE OF MY LETTER. MAINERS SHOULD NOT DIE NEEDLESSLY THROUGH THE INACTION OF OUR STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. NO MORE NEWSPAPER HEADLINES OR WATCHING TV DRAMA ABOUT THE DEATH OF SOMEONE'S CHILD'S OUT OF THEIR MIND'S DEATH. PLEASE SUPPORT LD 445

IN THE SPRING OF 1993 MY WIFE AND I WERE WATCHING OUR LATE SON CHRISTOPHER AND HIS BANGOR HIGH TEAM PLAY THE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME AGAINST SOUTH PORTLAND WHICH BEAT BANGOR IN 1992 IN A TERRIFIC 5 TIME OVERTIME GAME. THE BANGOR TEAM WANTED "BASKETBALL REVENGE." THEY GOT IT. THE ANNOUNCER REPORTED CHRIS PUT ON A ONE-MAN SHOW INCLUDING BEING THE HIGHEST SCORER. OUR HEARTS WERE SOARING. LITTLE DID MY WIFE THERESA AND I KNOW THAT IN A FEW YEARS THE EVIL FLOWER OF SCHIZOPHRENIA WOULD BLOSSOM IN HIS HEAD FROM THE BODY CHANGES THAT THIS HOROR BRINGS IN YOUNG ADULTS. TRAGICALLY, OUR SOCIETY AND FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT CRUELY WORSENS BY UNDERFUNDING, FAILING TO RECOGNIZE THEM AS "REAL" ILLNESSES LIKE A BROKEN ARM AND LARGELY MAKING JOKES ABOUT THEM.

THIS IS HOW FUNNY SEVERE SCHIZONPHRENIA IS: FOR 16 YEARS CHRIS AND OUR FAMILY LIVED WITH THIS 24/7 HORROR. HE GREW PROGRESSIVELY WORSE. SHORTLY, BEFORE HE DIED IN A HOUSE FIRE, CHRIS TOLD ME PUTIN HAD DIED AND HAD FLOWN TO PLUTO AND OTHER PLANETS AND THAT HE CHRIS HAD DONE THE SAME. DOES THAT SOUND LIKE HE OR ANYONE COULD MAKE SOUND LIFE DECISIONS? A NEUROLOGICAL CONDITION CALLED ANOSOGNOSIA HAD SET IN WHICH MADE HIM UNAWARE OF HIS OWN ILLNESS.THIS CONDITION IS COMMON IN SCHIZOPHRENA (51 %) AND OTHER SERIOUS BRAIN DISORDERS INCLUDING ALZHEIMIERS AND DEMENTIA WHERE SOMEHOW SOCIETY ACCEPTS THOSE TWO.) PLEASE SUPPORT LD 445!

### POINTS:

1. SOME MIGHT SAY THIS BILL MIGHT VIOLATE THE AMHI CONSENT DECREE HOW? BY BRINGING MORE INPATIENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES TO MAINE PAID BY THE FEDS???....

FACT: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CREATED IN 2019 THIS WAIVER PROGRAM. OTHER STATES THROUGHOUT THE U.S AND NEW HAMPSHIRE AND VERMONT HAVE WAIVER PROGRAMS IN BOTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND "MENTAL ILLNESS"

2. GOV MILLS THROUGH DHHS WAS WISE TO APPROVE A WAIVER PROGRAM FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE A FEW YEARS AGO BUT NOT A WAIVER FOR "MENTAL ILLNESS." BOTH ARE CO-OCCURRING DISORDERS BOTH ARE CONSIDERED "MENTAL ILLNESS." THIS TERRIBLE DISCRIMINATORY INCONSISTENT POLICY HARMS THOSE WITH BRAIN DISORDERS AND ROBS THE MAINE TAXPAYER OF MILLIONS OF FEDERAL FUNDS. PLEASE PASS LD 445!

3. I HAVE WORKED AND ADVOCATED IN MAINE SINCE 1979 FOR THOSE WITH SERIOUS BRAIN DISORDERS: FACT THE AMHI CONSENT DECREE OFTEN FAILED BECAUSE COMMUNITY SERVICES WERE UNDERFUNDED. FACT: LD 445 BRINGS FEDERAL FUNDS FOR NEEDED COMMUNITY SERVICES!

4. STATE LEGISLATURE MAKE THE MAINE STATE TAXPAYER HAPPY. BRING MILLIONS TO MAINE AND END THIS CONGRESSIONAL DISCRIMINATION. LET'S GET OUR FEDERAL SHARE OF FUNDS. REMEMBER SINCE 1965 NOT A NICKEL OF FEDERAL FUNDS HAVE COME TO MAINE!!

5. STATE LEGISLATURE MAKE THE MAINE STATE TAXPAYER HAPPY. BRING MILLIONS TO MAINE AND END THIS FEDERAL DISCRIMINATION IMPOSED BY THIS INSTITUTE OF MENTAL DISEASES EXCLUSION LAW SINCE 1965!! PASS LD 445!

PLEASE READ MY MAINE SUNDAY TELEGRAM LETTER BELOW:

LETTERS \_ Posted Yesterday at 4:00 AM

INCREASE FONT SIZE 

# **Letter to the editor: There is a cure for crowded Maine hospitals**

A law denying appropriate care to people with psychiatric disorders fills hospital beds and ERs. Passing L.D. 445 would change that.

The Maine Sunday Telegram shines a front-page spotlight on a major Maine and national problem (“With no place to go, some patients in Maine are spending months in hospitals,” [March 5](#)).

The article spells out many reasons why hospitals are overcrowded, but, in my view, the most important one, [a law denying appropriate care](#) to people with serious brain disorders, has the effect of filling up hospital emergency rooms and beds and creating more homelessness. Generally, psychiatric patients are better served in community services, with the support of progressive treatment teams.

[Passing a new bill, L.D. 445](#), will save many Maine lives, end the federal discrimination taking place against serious brain disorders since 1965 in Maine and save taxpayers multiple millions. Sen. Joe Baldacci is sponsoring a bill, with the key support of Sen. Richard Bennett and Rep. Ambureen Rana. It directs the Department of Health and Human Services to apply for a waiver for the discriminatory Medicaid limitation on payment to appropriate services.

Tragically, Maine also discriminates by having a waiver for substance abuse but not one for “mental illness.” Both are co-occurring disorders – why the policy inconsistency? End this state government self-imposed horror. Maine’s Legislature should pass L.D. 445. New Hampshire, Vermont and other states get federal funds, not just for inpatient services but also for community services, including progressive treatment team funds.

Everybody should support L.D. 445. Go to the public hearing at 1 p.m. Tuesday in Room 209 of the Cross Building in Augusta, or [testify via Zoom](#) in support. The life you save may be your

loved one's.

**Joe H. Pickering Jr.**