

**I am Don Banton from Waterville, Maine**

**Thank you for the opportunity to speak to LD 540— “An Act To Establish Peer Respite Services for Adults with Mental Health challenges in Maine.**

**I fully agree and was pleased when I read the stipulations that LD 540 gives to DHHS to set up the two Peer Respite Centers in Maine. I read the Talking Points for LD 540 that CCSM gave us and learned that historically the Peer Respite Centers are.**

- a. A warm environment because of the consensual support, without coercion, therefore creating a respectful experience for the Center guests.**
- b. The peer support workers will receive training in:
  - 1. Alternatives to Suicide and**
  - 2. Wellness Recovery Plan****
- c. Guests historically report high satisfaction.**

**I love the sound of these statements and I would love to see Maine have Peer Respite Centers again.**

**I am knowledgeable about the need for Peer Respite Centers because:**

- a. I have experience as a guest at two Maine Crisis Houses**
- b. I completed the Intensive Peer Support training in Maine.**
- c. I worked as a Mental Health Worker in the inpatient**

**Psychiatric center at Maine General Medical Center in Augusta for fifteen years.**

- d. I worked for a year at a Crisis House in Maine**

**e. I identify as a person living with mental health challenges.**

**I have hopeful knowledge about the future of Peer Respite Services in Maine. Last week I spoke with the director of a Peer Recovery Center in Maine who said she would love to have her program run one of the Peer Respite Programs.**

**I would now like to close with the following:**

**There were bones all over the plain—dry bones.**

**Can these bones live again?**

**Spirit said, I'll attach sinews to you,**

**Put meat on your bones,**

**Cover you with skin, and**

**Breathe life into you.**

**You will come alive, again.**

**It is my hope that the Peer Respite Centers will bring the breath of life back into the lives of those who had been suicidal, depressed, experiencing other diagnoses or simply feeling down and out.**