



Consumer Council System of Maine
A Voice for Consumers of Mental Health Services

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

My name is Simonne Maline. I am the Executive Director for the Consumer Council System of Maine (CCSM). I am here today on behalf of the CCSM to testify in strong support of LD ~~833~~⁸³¹ "An Act **Regarding Abandoned Vehicles Due to Involuntary Psychiatric Hospitalization**".

The Consumer Council System of Maine is a public instrumentality written into State Statute by the Maine Legislature to serve in an advisory capacity and to provide legislators with guidance and advice regarding the delivery of effective and appropriate adult mental health services from those served by them.

We want to thank Sen. Moore for her willingness to help with the small but important issue that we bring before you today.

Think about how important your car is to you? Could you function if it was taken away and you could not afford to just buy another vehicle? It is your independence and your stability (esp. if you live in a rural area and are also employed and cannot get to work).

This is happening to our peers, particularly those who are involuntarily committed to treatment and have no control over what happens to them.

I know Kevin from Disability Rights Maine (DRM) will share about how the statute can be changed to give a moment of pause for those affected.

The reason we know this is happening is that our peers have had to receive support from DRM as well as hearing from others that have been adversely affected. People have lost their only possession or have needed help to pay to get their car back if they can in time. If you live on Social Security for your sole income, do you have 2 grand in your bank account? Probably not.

If you have never experienced a mental health crisis, let me paint a picture for all of you. You drive yourself to an emergency room or your car is somewhere where the crisis happened and leave it there. You are not in the best space to remember details like your car could be impounded if unattended. If you have been blue papered to an emergency room and eventual hospital these stays are not quick. If you do not have family or friends which happens often for support, there may be no one that poses the question, "where is your car"? By the time you may clear enough, it is often too late or a pricetag you cannot afford. The notifications needed to be sent to you will most likely not find you in the hospital, they go to your home.



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This bill would not give out protected records. It is simply a letter on hospital stationary stating they are there. It would simply help with someone who is involuntarily in a hospital give them a clearer step to keep a vital asset, one they may desperately need to continue treatment when they leave the hospital.

Thank you,

Simonne Maline

Executive Director
