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March 26, 2025

*Testimony of Representative Nina Milliken presenting*

## **LD 496, An Act Regarding the Time Frame for Issuing a Silver Alert and to Require Silver Alerts for All Persons Missing from Certain Inpatient Facilities**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety*

Good morning, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and friends and colleagues on the best committee in the Maine Legislature. My name is Nina Milliken and I am lucky to represent the communities of Blue Hill, Brooksville, Castine, Sedgwick, Surry and Trenton in the Maine House. I am happy to be here today to present my bill, **LD 496, An Act Regarding the Time Frame for Issuing a Silver Alert and to Require a Silver Alert for all Persons Missing from Inpatient Facilities.**

This committee is now familiar with the very difficult situation that has been faced by Tammy Scully following the disappearance of her son, Graham Lacher. I put this bill in, again, as a direct response to some of the tragic hiccups in the investigation of Mr. Lacher.

As drafted, this bill would require that a Silver Alert be issued when a person goes missing from a group home, mental hospital, psychiatric ward, or other facility or division of a facility providing inpatient mental health services. Additionally, notification of those Silver Alerts would need to be sent out to all hospitals, homeless shelters, soup kitchens and public libraries in the state within 24 hours, in addition to all police departments. Lastly, if that person is not located, the Silver Alert would need to be reissued every two weeks.

Silver Alerts are meant to be issued when a person goes missing who is elderly, developmentally, or cognitively-impaired and who are deemed at-risk. In Maine, we have such limited access to services for folks who have these types of challenges that it feels safe to assume that people who are in group homes, mental hospitals, psychiatric wards and other mental healthcare facilities are impaired to the point that they should be a subject of these types of alerts when they go missing.

I know that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) has concerns about the bill and they will likely testify in opposition. However, while I understand there may be some technical issues about how to implement this legislation, I think there are changes that could be made to get this bill to a point that it will be useful and we should vote to pass it. I am happy to continue to have conversations with the folks at DPS and try to get to an agreement on what can be done, because it is clear that some significant changes need to be made based on how the process played out in Graham's case.

I appreciate your time and consideration. I am happy to try to answer any questions, but please know that we have some highly qualified folks who are testifying following me that are likely better suited to respond to your questions.