

MARCH 26 2025 TESTIMONY ON LD496
Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee
Kimberly Lacher; Bucksport, Maine

Sen. Beebe-Center, Rep. Hasenfus & Members of the Committee: My name is Kim Lacher from Bucksport, Maine. I am the stepmother of missing vulnerable adult Graham Lacher, and I am here to speak in favor of LD 496. I thought what I could best tell you is what it's like to have a missing loved one in Maine and how your vote can help our state do a better job.

My husband and I arrived within 2 hours of Graham's disappearance from the DDPC mental hospital in Bangor. I was surprised to not see any police there—that it was just Graham's mom & stepfather. Based on a prior search for Graham in Norridgewock, I expected to see police & game wardens & dogs and drones. But I saw none of that. Nothing had been cordoned off & no one was in contact with us to let us know what was being done to try to find him.

I can't fully describe the agony of wanting to do something, but not knowing how to even get started without professional guidance. On the second day, the search group DEEMI—who weren't invited by local law enforcement, but showed up to help anyway—assisted us the most. They told us the words to use and the questions to ask in order get more resources at the scene.

It took **DAYS** to get anyone to thoroughly search with dogs or drones—and that only came after we were sent in circles, begging for help from any officials we could make contact with. And even then, I was shocked at how inadequate the response was.

At some point during that first week, I asked my daughter-in-law, a hospital ED nurse, "When did you get the notice that Graham was missing?" And she answered, "We don't get notified." That floored me. Why in the world, when you're dealing with an endangered, vulnerable adult, aren't hospitals notified? There clearly was no playbook when something like this happens. Don't you think there should be?

Just in case you don't know what it's like to have a missing loved one, I can share with you that my husband—Graham's father—had a heart attack from the stress of it. We know you can't prevent anything like that, but surely you can help with some of the things mentioned in this bill.

Issuing a Silver Alert for a vulnerable person should be an automatic, immediate thing. And notifying as many other groups and authorities who might interact with him only makes sense if Maine truly wants to find missing people. When your loved one goes missing, you want to feel hopeful, not helpless. Please vote to pass LD496.