

In- Support **LD 1426**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Willa Stockwell, and I am a Sweetser clinician with the Child ACT program in York County.

I'm speaking today in strong support of LD 1426.

I'm here to speak in strong support of this bill because I've seen firsthand the powerful and lasting impact the Child ACT program has had on individuals and families in York County. I believe wholeheartedly in its potential to change lives on a broader scale.

In my past outpatient work, I met with clients every day who were doing their best to navigate incredibly complex challenges. And while individual therapy certainly has its place, I am continually struck by the amount of progress—and the speed of that progress—that clients make when they're part of the ACT program. The difference is the team. ACT brings together a comprehensive support system: therapy, peer support, medication management, employment assistance, family support, case management and community resources.

That full-circle approach allows me, as a therapist, to focus on the work I'm trained to do, while knowing that every other piece of the puzzle is also being addressed by professionals who care just as deeply.

There's one client in particular I want to talk about today. Honestly, if he were here, he could probably tell his story better than I can—he'd charm you all. He's smart, opinionated, strong-willed, deeply kind and loyal. He's also a young person who struggles with intense anxiety, anger, and emotional regulation.

Before coming to ACT, he had been hospitalized following a suicide attempt. That hospitalization was necessary in the moment—but it was also deeply traumatic. He was hours away from home, in an unfamiliar place, and his family described barely recognizing him when they visited. They felt helpless and heartbroken.

When the opportunity arose for him to receive intensive, wraparound support at home through the ACT program, it was a turning point. Since joining the program, he's made incredible progress.

He's back in school. He's engaging with his treatment team. He's learning real, lasting coping skills that are helping him build stability and confidence. And most importantly, he's doing it all while remaining connected to his family and his community, not isolated in a hospital far away.

Of course, these changes haven't been linear. There have been difficult moments when the family was on the brink of returning to the hospital. But in those intense moments of crisis, they were able to lean on the ACT team—for support, for de-escalation, for help regulating emotions and beginning to repair.

Watching this boy and his mom in a tearful embrace after a difficult conversation and reconciliation and seeing her quietly mouth "thank you" to me in that moment, is a memory I carry with me. It's one of those moments that makes it crystal clear: we are doing something right here.

It's been a privilege to walk alongside this family as part of a team that's not just reacting to crises but helping to prevent them. Programs like ACT don't just treat symptoms, they recreate futures.

And that's why I strongly urge you to support this bill.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Willa Stockwell
Child ACT Clinician