

*132nd Legislature*  
***Senate of***  
***Maine***  
*Senate District 29*

***Senator Anne Carney***  
*3 State House Station*  
*Augusta, ME 04333-0003*  
*Office: (207) 287-1515*

*Testimony of Senator Anne Carney introducing*  
**LD 1866, An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding the State-designated Agency**  
**Advocating for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*  
May 12, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Senator Anne Carney, proudly representing Senate District 29, which includes South Portland, Cape Elizabeth and part of Scarborough. It is a pleasure to be with you to introduce LD 1866, “An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding the State-designated Agency Advocating for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness.”

As you know, both Riverview Psychiatric Center in Augusta and Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center in Bangor are operated by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for the State of Maine to provide services for people with severe mental illness. For many years, Disability Rights Maine (DRM) has contracted with DHHS to provide three institutional advocates at Riverview and Dorothea Dix as well as three community mental health advocates because it was required by the AMHI Consent Decree.

There is no question that these positions were instrumental in achieving the progress that ultimately led to the recent dismissal of the AMHI Consent Decree on December 3, 2024.

This bill seeks to ensure the continuation of these vital mental health advocacy services by specifying in statute that DHHS is required to maintain these contracts. This statutory obligation will ensure the uninterrupted presence of advocates in state hospitals and the community. It will protect these roles from future administrative cuts.

The Department of Health and Human Services intends to continue contracting with Disability Rights Maine, and it is my understanding that they have already received their allocation letter for fiscal year 2026. However, because this important advocacy service is no longer required by the Consent Decree, it is important that we, the Legislature, express our intent that these services be maintained going forward and are not at risk of being eliminated in the future.

This bill does not require additional funding because DHHS is already contracting for the exact same services that this bill puts into statute.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to introduce this legislation. I welcome any questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne". The script is cursive and fluid.

Anne Carney  
State Senator, District 29