

Richard Cantz

Windham, Maine

Testimony in support of LD 1216

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Rich Cantz, I live in Windham, Maine and I am here in support of LD1216 – and, to ask for your support too.

Suicide has changed the life of each person in this room. Whether someone has lost a person very close to them – or, has experienced a loss that is a bit more distant, we know the heartbreak that occurs. I certainly do.

I am a drummer in a local cover band. We aren't the best band, but we play music together for friendship, and as a chance to blow off some steam every week.

I'll always remember the day I showed up to practice and asked where "Snoop" was - he was our guitar player, and often the first to arrive. I could tell by the look on my bandmates' faces that the answer to my question was not a good one. The answer was that my friend and bandmate had died by suicide – it was numbing.

He was outgoing, funny, and positive. A great Dad, husband and bandmate. And so much more.

We know we can do more in Maine - and well beyond - to prevent suicide. The rate of suicide in Maine is much higher than the national average. But, the good news is that 988 helps save lives. It works.

LD1216 helps us all take an important step forward, ensuring that 988 is part of Maine law, bringing an additional dimension to our collective safety net.

Today, I'm asking for two things. The first is that you support LD1216. Because without your support, we do not move forward – together. The second is that I ask each of you to look for ways in your own life to raise awareness of 988. With your family, friends, neighbors, and beyond. Every small bit of increased visibility matters. I promise.

Thank you for your time and listening to my testimony. And, a very special thanks to Senator Nangle for all for his support, and sponsoring LD1216. I wish each of you all the best as you continue your important work as legislators.