

Testimony in Support of LD 2065

An Act to Provide One-time Funds to Support the Construction of a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility for At-risk Youth

Chair Ingwerson, Chair Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is **Bob Staples**. I am the **President of the Brett M. Staples Brain Disorder Awareness Coalition**, and I am here today in **strong support of LD 2065**.

This bill addresses a reality Maine can no longer work around: **we do not have enough appropriate, therapeutic residential capacity for youth with serious brain disorders who are already at risk**.

When care does not exist at the right level, at the right time, children fall through gaps that quickly become lifelong consequences. Families are left cycling through emergency rooms. Youth are placed far from home, sent out of state, or held in settings that were never designed to treat complex brain-based conditions. And far too often, the first “placement” becomes the juvenile justice system—not because of criminal intent, but because care failed to show up.

LD 2065 is not about expanding institutionalization. It is about **building the missing middle**—a therapeutic residential option for youth who are too ill to be safely treated at home, but who do not belong in hospitals, detention, or adult systems.

This funding is **one-time**, targeted, and practical. It invests in infrastructure that Maine has lacked for years, even as need has grown. And it recognizes something critical: **early, appropriate treatment changes trajectories**. When serious brain disorders are addressed in adolescence with stability, continuity, and clinical expertise, outcomes improve—not just for the child, but for families, schools, and communities.

From a systems perspective, this investment also makes fiscal sense. Residential treatment capacity reduces repeated emergency department boarding, law enforcement involvement, hospital readmissions, and costly out-of-state placements. Inaction is not neutral—it is expensive, disruptive, and harmful.

I would urge the committee to ensure that any facility supported under this bill emphasizes:

- Developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed care
- Family engagement and continuity
- Coordination with education and community-based services
- And clear pathways back to the least restrictive, most supportive environment possible

This bill sends an important message to Maine families: **your children are worth building for.**

LD 2065 does not claim to solve everything. But it takes a meaningful, responsible step toward a system that treats youth brain health as urgent, real, and deserving of investment—before crisis becomes destiny.

I respectfully urge the committee to **support LD 2065**.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to Maine's children and families.