

Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee Health and Human Services Cross Building, Thursday, March 25, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Emma Goltz and I am here today to testify in strong support of LD 674, "An Act to Support Early Intervention and Treatment of Psychotic Disorders."

Hello,

My name is Emma Goltz and I was a participant in the PIER program for just over three years. Being diagnosed with a serious mental illness was an incredibly daunting and challenging process to go through, yet being introduced to the PIER team and their amazing set of resources made me feel reassured and back to being a 'normal' human (whatever that may be). When I was struggling to understand what was going on in my brain, Dr. Douglas Robbins was able to draw out the neurons in my brain on a piece of paper and show me that my illness was just as it was a physical condition as a mental one. For me, this felt so important that someone was recognizing that what was happening in my head was something that could be treated felt amazing. The team based approach at PIER felt comprehensive and they all were so genuine in their care to help me and my family. I was able to find new ways to manage my condition and by the time I graduated from PIER I was well equipped to do new things with my life.

Today, I am a full time student at the University of Maine at Farmington regularly making high honors on the dean's list. I also have worked for the last four years at an inclusive preschool in Midcoast Maine. PIER has given me the tools to not only survive, but thrive in my community and with my academic goals. The team at PIER recognized that I might have some hard days, but they allowed me to get back up the next day and try again. This gave me a strong sense of resilience that I am always thankful for my experiences at PIER for. Today, I continue to engage with PIER through their activity groups on Zoom and their Speakers Bureau for graduated PIER members. PIER gave me the chance to learn deeply about myself, while gathering skills to help me prepare for the rest of my life. I am so grateful for the team at PIER and hope to share with my testimony how valuable this program is.

Thank you!

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