

Joe Pickering
Bangor

Additional information in support of LD 1090. The State Legislature needs to take
Please read the letter and the article I wrote re: supporting this Bill and an excerpt
from the Treatment Advocacy Center a national non profit. Our State has deprived
those with Brain Disorders and Addictions for too long using outdated and destructive
terms and causing the Maine Taxpayer multiple millions placing them in Jails. It is
AB SOLUTELY ESSENTIAL that the Act Team Legal Expenses be paid by the
state which will be reimbursed by the Federal Government as other states have done !
We do not need any study but we sorely do need expertise. The Treatment Advocacy
Center's has helped more than 30 states reformed their civil commitment laws. Such
reforms ensure more people get better care, earlier.

Letters to the editor for Monday, April 26, 2021
<https://bangordailynews.com/2021/04/25/opinion/letters/monday-april-26-2021...>
Maine can lead on ending stigma of brain disorders
<https://bangordailynews.com/2021/02/02/opinion/...>
Feb 03, 2021 · Joe Pickering ...

Excerpt from the Treatment Advocacy Center:

Improving Civil Commitment Laws and Standards

Voluntary treatment for any medical condition is always preferable. However, because of the nature of mental illness, involuntary treatment and hospitalization is necessary in certain circumstances, especially if the illness has impacted that person's ability to identify their own need for treatment.

Each state determines its own laws for when and how an individual can be required to receive treatment for mental illness. These laws, known as civil commitment laws or codes, must satisfy certain constitutional requirements, but otherwise may vary greatly from state to state. Since the Treatment Advocacy Center's founding, more than 30 states have reformed their civil commitment laws with our support. Such reforms ensure more people get better care, earlier.

But barriers to treatment remain, so our work goes on. Become an advocate and help us improve access to treatment for serious mental illness.

The mental health system is broken

Fifty years of systematically limiting access to treatment for mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and severe bipolar disorder have left countless individuals and families with nowhere to turn when a loved one needs care.

The system is dysfunctional from top to bottom.

At the federal level, 50 years of treating mentally ill adults separately and unequally have left countless individuals with serious mental illness without access to treatment or hope for recovery.

At the state level, outdated laws too often restrict access to treatment until people become dangerous to themselves or others, while state hospital beds have been eliminated almost to the point of extinction.

At the county level, half the counties in the United States do not have a single mental health professional within them, much less one of the community mental health centers meant to replace the state psychiatric hospitals of the 1950s.

The human and economic cost of this neglect has been catastrophic. People with the most severe psychiatric diseases make up barely 3% of the total population, of the total population, but are vastly more likely to be arrested, incarcerated, homeless or unemployed. Help us fix the system.