

To: Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Honorable members of the committee

From: Audrey Piltch

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 108, An Act to Authorize the Release of Military Records to the Office of Chief Medical Examiner for the Purposes of Suicide Reporting and Prevention

I am writing to you as a recent graduate of Freeport High School and a young adult who was born and raised in Maine, urging you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 108.

I was a senior in high school during the Lewiston shootings, when the spontaneous afternoon my friend spent at my house turned into a two-night sleepover as she worried for her family living on the edge of Durham, not knowing if it was safe to return. When we later read the news of Robert Card’s history of mental health struggles leading to the shootings and his suicide, it was clear the signs were there. Card joined the Army in 2002, and though he never saw combat, the many others who do struggle for years afterward with PTSD.

By putting this bill into effect, we can prevent the violence and pain that the state felt after the harm Card did to others and himself. Mental health has been recognized as an important part of human well-being somewhat recently in the history of medicine, but it’s clear that efforts made towards complete health in the body and mind are increasingly important—especially in an age of loneliness and disconnect facilitated by technology.

With the goal of a greater awareness of mental health struggles and improving support for those fighting self-harm and suicidal thoughts, I encourage you to support LD 108.

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Piltch

Freeport