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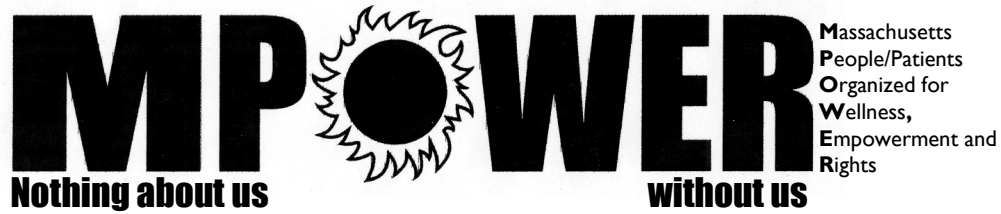
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Good afternoon Representative Malia and Senator Flanagan and Members of the Committee.

My name is Linda Fountas. I am the President of the MPOWER Board of Directors.

MPOWER is a statewide member-run organization of people with lived experience of mental health diagnosis and/or trauma. We are a grassroots organization working for positive change in the mental health system. We advocate for political and social change within the mental health system, the community and statewide.

One of MPOWER's top legislative priorities is the passage of the enforcement of and appeal process for the Five Fundamental Rights and a sixth fundamental right of daily access to fresh air and the outdoors.

MPOWER was instrumental in the passage of the original Five Fundamental Rights legislation that has been the law for over eleven years.

These rights are very frequently violated, and it is pretty much impossible to appeal violations. Hospitals and group homes are brazenly violating the law constantly. These are civil liberties violations. This reinforces stigma which is rampant in the mental health system and society as a whole.

This bill calls for an additional sixth fundamental right which is daily access to fresh air and the outdoors. Fresh air is very important. It aides in recovery—studies have proven that exposure to sunlight is extremely beneficial with alleviating depression and other mental health conditions. Even prisoners are given daily access to fresh air.

Within the last twenty years, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Supreme Court's Olmstead decision have proclaimed that people, regardless of disabilities, should be treated as equal citizens of this country.

Please respond by reporting these bills, H.1945 and S.743, favorably. Thank you.

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