

December 21, 2022

President Troy Jackson
Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Testimony Against “LD 3 An Act to Establish the Winter Energy Relief Payment Program to Aid Residents with High Heating Costs and to Finalize the COVID Pandemic Relief Payment Program”

President Jackson, Speaker Talbot Ross, and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah Trites and I live in Sabattus. I am a person who lives with a disability. I am testifying against LD 3 today.

I do think that heating is important but the money should not come out of services that people with disabilities get. This is going to make waiting lists even longer. Because right now I am on section 19, but I am waiting for Section 18 services. This is a very limited slot already and it is going to make it even longer for me to wait to get the services I need. There are many people who are waiting for waiver services in Maine and the money could be used to help serve more people.

It would be nice to be able to get out in the community. Right now on Section 19 I am not allowed to go in the worker's car. There is a problem with gas, mileage and liability. I do like the services I am getting in my home, I just can't get out in the community. I get seven hours a week but only at my home. My worker can do the shopping and errands for me, and help me shower and cook, I just can't get to go out with her.

People feel isolated when they cannot go in the community. It would be nice to be able to access the community and work on different goals I have in my life. I am really grateful for what I am getting, but I think it can be better if I am in the community. I had to give up my homemaker services in order to get the section 19 services. This helps out my mom because she doesn't have to worry about helping me with as many things.

I think people with disabilities get the short end of the stick. Some people might not understand or know that these services are as important as it is. There should be enough money for everyone to get heat, I have electric heat, which is very expensive. I do get LIHEAP, and I apply every year to get help with my heating. It varies sometimes and it has been based on my income. Sometimes I get more, sometimes I get less but it always helps.

Addressing the home heating cost problem in Maine should be a priority, just not at the expense of people living with disabilities.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Sarah Trites

Sabattus, ME