

I am the parent of a 42-year-old man who is medically and intellectually disabled. I am very concerned that LD3 as written, sacrifices Maine citizens with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities once again. The administration proposes removing 35 million of State money from Section 21,29,18, and 20 Home and Community Based Services. For far too long, the services for our family and friends with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, have been grossly underfunded. The most housing vulnerable group in our state right now are adults with ID/DD. By the end of this week, 75 group homes will have closed, often returning children to the homes of their aging parents who are unable to meet their own health needs, to say nothing of providing 24 hour a day care for their beloved sons and daughters. The irony cannot be lost that part of LD 3 includes emergency housing assistance. How can the most housing vulnerable group in our state be asked to give up funding for a group that is less vulnerable?

There are over 2000 Maine citizens with ID/DD stagnating on a wait list for services. Until you have listened to a parent describe the angst of knowing they cannot die because their son or daughter will have no place to go, it is hard to understand the magnitude of this dereliction of duty by this administration. Although there was a good faith effort by many legislators, the shortage of Direct Support Professionals continues to impact the ID/DD population disproportionately and the legislature must address the need to pay a competitive wage to attract a robust and quality workforce. Deappropriating money for HCBS funding is not the answer. Technically the administration is correct that the deappropriation does not directly cut existing services, but only because HCBS for Mainers with disabilities are not fully funded.

I do support targeted home energy relief for low income Maine neighbors, however funding cannot sacrifice people with disabilities to achieve this. I call on you to find alternative funding sources.