

Darla Chafin  
Augusta  
LD 3

Senator Jackson, Rep. Talbot-Ross, and distinguished members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs Services:

I testify neither for nor against LD 3. I know there is a need for relief from high energy prices. But I also know that even in the best times, it has seemed to become a habit to cut any proposed investment in providing for the increased needs and quality of care included in the HCBS rules. Even in previous years, last-minute cuts to the HCBS budget caused the dream of appropriate services and no wait lists to disappear.

Last year we managed, except for those group homes closed due to loss of staff and money needed for administration. The only choice may be whether a former tenant takes whatever placement is found or returns to their parent's home. My daughter's home contract has a clause that gives me 30 days notice before ending the lease.

I abhor the idea of people living in the cold. But I also tremble at the thought of those like my nonverbal daughter with poor balance returning home to aging parents. In spite of being told by staff in other homes that "She's just gotta learn," she only regressed until she found a placement that accepted her as a whole person. She was able to trust them enough to understand them. Her efforts and ability to help were praised and followed with gentle coaching in small difficult steps. She feels accepted and proud.

I would be delighted to help you or a member of the Department become better acquainted with these people.  
Thank you for your work.