

March 16, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Kandie Cleaves, I live in Garland, and I wish to testify in favor of **LD 619 "An Act to Ensure Coordination of Care for MaineCare Members."**

I wholeheartedly agree with Section 3 of this bill.

I had the opportunity to be a Validator for Disability Rights Maine for the Home and Community Based Services validation process. It was during that time that I first learned that people who are already living with extremely limited incomes were actually having to pay to have others manage their money. They can be charged up to 10% of their monthly benefit, or \$48.00 whichever is less. As of 2023 an individual who was disabled prior to being able to work receives a Federal amount or SSI of only \$914.00 a month. This leaves them with \$866. To then cover all their expenses. I frequently saw people left with only \$20 to spend on items they may need or want during the month. As you think of that \$20, please think of how much you have spent within the past month on extras such as a favorite coffee, clothing, a night out or even simply buying yourself lunch. By allowing the cost of their payee services to be reimbursed, you will be giving back far more than just money, you will be allowing them to have an opportunity to have more freedom.

In Section 5, the reimbursement around paying for Peer services is vague, it is my understanding this is so Peer Organizations can help in the design. Having taken the training, myself to be a Recovery Coach I strongly hope the guidance is followed. If peers are weighed down by overwhelming amounts of paperwork as most providers are, it would eliminate the effectiveness of peer work.

In closing I would again ask that you **vote in favor of passing LD 619.**

Respectfully,

Kandie Cleaves

Garland