

April 5, 2023

100 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Testimony to Support LD 1114 An Act to Eliminate the Annual Medical Eligibility Determinations of Need for Families of Children with Disabilities.

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

My name is Nicole Easler and I live in Presque Isle. I am a self-advocate, meaning I am a person who lives with a disability, and I am a member of Speaking Up for Us Maine.

I support LD 1114 because I find that it is stressful for families to get services for their children. This bill is important to me because I had the Katie Beckett waiver when I was a child.

Every year for many years my mother had to go through questions and answers. My mother had to answer very personal questions about me while I was in the room which made me incredibly uncomfortable. Going through that every year was extremely stressful and unpleasant for me as well as for my mother. It was a burden to have to fill all that paperwork out every year when my service needs didn't change very much each year.

It was also stressful because I didn't want to be at those appointments and my mother had to try to do all that paperwork while I was uncooperative. I wasn't understanding why I was there, so it puts stress on the child and on the family to force the child to sit through that process and the interview was several hours long and that was annually.

This bill won't help me specifically because I'm no longer a child, but it will help other families to be less stressed and it will mean that children won't have to sit through the interview process and be talked about while they're in the same room. Families that have children with disabilities are already stressed enough and having to go through a huge amount of paperwork introduced every year puts additional stress on families that they just don't need. I will be available to answer questions in person, by phone, or by e-mail.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicole Easler

Presque Isle

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