



**Testimony of Catherine Thibedeau, Executive Director
In Support of LD 473**

Resolve, to Expand the Eligibility for and Increase the Number of Hours of Applied Behavior Analysis Services Authorized by the MaineCare Program

**Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
March 29th 2023**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committees:

My name is Catherine Thibedeau, and I am the Executive Director of Independence Advocates of Maine. Our agency provides services and supports for people with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and Autism (IDD/A) in the northern part of our State, specifically in Penobscot, Piscataquis, Hancock, and Aroostook Counties. We have been in operation since 1977, and our services include various types of services within Sections 20, 21, 29, and 50 of MaineCare. Through these services, we support many of Maine's most complex clients in our various residential services.

I'm writing in strong support of LD 473. In addition, I support MACSP's testimony on this bill, LD 473, that Jennifer Putnam submitted. There have been long-standing issues within our service delivery system where those with complex behavioral health needs need more funding or support to meet their needs within the community. This is a simple but incredibly effective step in the correct direction. It will improve access to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services for adults with IDD who have complex high behavioral needs and receive services under MaineCare Sections 21 or 29. When an individual moves from children's services to adult services, their funding for ABA consultation drops by 89%; from 139 to 16.5 hours annually.

Given all of the inadequacies of our state's support and response system to those with complex behavioral needs, especially Crisis Service, it is a no-brainer to afford this modest increase to support and therapeutic services. It is an essential to improve the ability for People with IDD/A to live successfully and safely within their communities. Therefore, I urge support LD 473.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please reach out with any questions you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Thibedeau
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