

04-26- 2023

To: The committee of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS),

I am writing to support the 1666 Bill.

An Act to Modernize the State Supplement to Supplemental Security Income by Updating the State Supplement and Removing Marriage Disincentives

Presented by Senator TIPPING of Penobscot. Cosponsored by Representative ROEDER of Bangor and Senators: BALDACCI of Penobscot, INGWERSEN of York, MOORE of Washington, Representative: OSHER of Orono.

I would like to make a testimony addressing my daughter's loss of her social security Insurance (SSI) after having married her husband who has a disability as well.

Before my daughter got married she lived with us her parents and received her full SSI benefits, our income was not an issue as she was her own person and an adult and qualified for her SSI due to her disability. She would participate by paying part of the expenses and was able to be independent by having her SSI Income.

She attended a Day Program where she met a man and fell in love, she continued to live with us for an additional 10 years not living with the man, because she wanted to be right in God's eye.

After 10 years of waiting because of the worry of the marriage penalty , we all decided to get together with her future husband's case manager and my daughter's case manager with Social Security. We were told by SSI she would lose most of her \$780 to \$250 that was in early 2020. We though that was bad enough, but it got worse after they got married. I was contacted by SSI that her check would be \$6.75. I thought they were pulling my leg, no that was the result. I asked how can that be? I was told that her husband's expenses did not change. I asked how does that makes sense, she will be using the hot water, eating food and creating more electricity. I asked who would be paying for her sanitary napkins, clothes, heating, electricity, food, etc.. My daughter became dependent on being independent.

To date my daughter has lost all her SSI because her husband has SSDI and his income affects her making them below poverty, but when she was living with us our income did not matter.

There are many disable people who would like to get married but do not because of this marriage penalty, they cannot lose their benefits.

When we were asked where we would find the money to support marriage, our answer is they have the funding it was taken way after marriage.

SSI was started 50 years ago and back then a single person could have \$2000. in their bank account and if married they could only have \$3,000 as a couple. It stands the same today 50 years ago was a lot of money compared to today, this needs to change!

Sincerely

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