

April 27, 2023

100 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Testimony in support of LD 1666 “An Act to Modernize the State Supplement to Supplemental Security Income by Updating the State Supplement and Removing Marriage Disincentives”

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

My name is Brian Harnish and I live in Orono. I am a self-advocate and serve on the Board of Speaking Up For Us.

I come from a place where I was engaged at one point but we couldn't get married because she was able bodied and working full time. While I probably wouldn't have lost my SSDI, I would have lost my Mainecare. I am in support of LD 1666.

The percentage that Maine contributes to SSI not being updated since 1974 is ridiculous and really needs to be changed. Especially with the way the economy is currently.

People not being able to live the way they want is obviously going to affect their mental health. I am also part of the Consumer Council System of Maine and mental health concerns are very important to me. I don't think the marriage penalty is right. It is an antiquated system and it is not giving people the opportunity to live life like they want to.

It is limiting our abilities as persons with disabilities, which are already limited in certain ways. We don't need to be limited more.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony. I will be available to answer questions by email.

Sincerely,

Brian Harnish

Orono, ME

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