

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 Regina Bowie and I live in Presque Isle, Maine. I am a self-advocate and currently the Treasure on the Board of Directors for Speaking Up For Us. I am testifying in support of LD 1666 because it is important to update Supplemental Security Income according to the current economic standards.

It adds a little bit of income and gives an update according to the current standard. It will help me deal with the rising cost of daily expenses and a bit of extra income will ease the burden. If I chose to get married in the future, I will know that I or my spouse will not lose our entire income.

I have a fiancé who has really special needs and because of that we are not living together. We tried to have a ceremony because we want to get married. Because of his needs, we were not able to get married the way we wanted to. It has been a negative impact on the both of us. We have tried to do this in a way that works for the both of us. Because of these reasons, we had a commitment ceremony. If we had married like we wanted to, we would have both lost our benefits. This has taken a toll on us both emotionally and physically and we just don't think it is fair. This situation has negatively impacted our lives because we don't even live together like a normal couple.

This bill will help others ease the burden of the expense of living as well as help them make a choice when they plan to get married.

It will hurt if rent is increased all at once and it will feel more like a burden than help. It will be the same for others if their rent is increased all at once, taking the entire income increase.

They need to look at increasing the rent slowly because the added benefits will affect the amount of rent that I will be responsible for paying, therefore we will not really benefit from the increase to help with daily expenses.

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

Sincerely,

Regina Bowie

Presque Isle, ME

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