

May 4, 2023

Re: Additional information in support of LD 1544, An Act to Improve Economic Security for Maine Children by Establishing the Maine Dependent Tax Credit

Chair Perry, Chair Grohoski, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Taxation:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide follow-on written information to supplement my oral testimony and previous written testimony in support of LD 1544.

Because it came to my attention during public hearing that the bill's refundable dependent tax credit also pertained to adult dependents—including adult dependents with disabilities—I shared additional information at public hearing about the vast disproportionality of poverty among people with disabilities—information close to me personally as the parent of a young adult with a significant disability and close to me professionally as director of the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies (CCIDS)¹. This disproportionality is even larger for *Mainers* with disabilities. Here is more detail, with full sourcing:

Disproportionality of Poverty Among People with Disabilities²

- People with disabilities are disproportionately in poverty, in Maine even more than in the United States at large:
 - In 2018, among people age 16-64 without a disability, Maine's poverty rate (8.2%) was one-quarter below the national average (10.9%)—yet among people age 16-64 with a disability, Maine's poverty rate (32.8%) was about one-quarter *above* the national average (26.0%).
- The disparity is even more pronounced for people age 16-64 with a cognitive disability:
 - In 2018, among people age 16-64 with a cognitive disability, Maine's poverty rate (42.0%) was more than one-*third* above the national average (30.8%).
- Among people with disabilities age 16-64, Maine's poverty rate (32.8%) is about one-quarter above the national average.
- Among people w cognitive disability age 16-64, Maine's poverty rate (42.0%) is more than one-third above the national average.

The bill would thus target an even more vulnerable group of Mainers than I had understood. I therefore urge the Committee even more strongly to please support the proposed legislation.

Respectfully,

Alan B. Cobo-Lewis, PhD

¹ I am submitting this testimony in my personal capacity, as I had already testified on the bill in my personal capacity before I fully understood the disability connection. However, I do note that part of the federal mandate of CCIDS, as a federally funded University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities authorized by the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, is to educate and advise policymakers, including members of the state legislature.

² Winsor, Jean; Timmons, Jaimie; Butterworth, John; Migliore, Alberto; Domin, Daria; Zalewska, Agnes; Shepard, John. (2021). StateData: The national report on employment services and outcomes through 2018. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion. Retrieved 05/04/2023 from https://www.thinkwork.org/sites/default/files/files/state_data_2021_F.pdf