

TESTIMONY

For honorable members of the Health and Human Services committee of the 131 Maine Legislature, I (name withheld) offer the following written testimony in opposition to LD 2009, An Act to Prevent Abandonment of Children and Adults with Disabilities in Hospitals.

I am the grandfather and sole guardian of a 16-year-old special education student who has been hospitalized a number of times for suicide ideation and self-injury. As such, I am both frightened and appalled by the implied goals of LD 2009, the proposal before this committee.

In cases like mine, it could force loving and responsible parents-guardians to assume life-or-death responsibility for a still-unstable child simply to make room for another child in crisis. The system already has the practical effect of forcing many caregivers to assume responsibility despite knowing that stability is likely temporary. That's the reality, as we all know, because appropriate long-term treatment options are either non-existent or virtually impossible to access.

Maine lawmakers, especially members of the Health and Human Services committee, should be looking for real solutions when it comes to the mental health challenges of some of the state's most vulnerable citizens. Enacting such a cruel and unreasonable law would be a travesty.

(I am requesting anonymity to avoid causing embarrassment for my granddaughter, but I'd have no problem revealing my identity for members of the committee.)

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David McNabb
PORTLAND
LD 2009

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