

Janet Duncan
Portland
LD 2166

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee

RE: LD 2166 An Act to Establish a Grant Program to Increase Postsecondary Educational Opportunities for Students with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorder

My name is Janet Duncan, I live in Portland and I am a retired nurse practitioner who practiced on a palliative care team.

My work provided me the opportunity to work with many teens and young adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. I was humbled and amazed by the abilities of these children to communicate, especially as technology advanced and thereby clarify information for providers that could inform their medical care. Otherwise we are dependent on the sometimes confusing ques that only their parents have learned through the 24/7 care they provide. I remember one teenager easily answering questions on her I-Pad after we had thought her communication was only through gestures, eye movements and facial expressions.

Understandably her parents had told us how smart she was and they recognized her abilities long before her providers. Having been afforded some one-on-one time with the hospital Communication Specialists and simple technology, she excelled.

Children like her deserve to have the same post-secondary educational opportunities as those without her challenges. Thus increasing the opportunity to pursue employment, develop community, be more independent and lead fulfilling lives.

Please support these children in having equal post-secondary educational opportunities as their able-bodied and cognitively intact peers.