



Testimony of Laura Cordes

**In support of LD 2128 *An Act Regarding Nonemergency Transportation for MaineCare Members*
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services**

February 1, 2024

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee.

My name is Laura Cordes. I am the Executive Director of the Maine Association for Community Service Providers (MACSP). MACSP is the statewide association of 90 individual, mission driven agencies providing person centered and individualized educational, vocational, residential and community supports, as well as specialized services and care to several thousand of Maine's children and adults who have either intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, or brain injuries, so that they may live full and meaningful lives in the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 2128 *An Act Regarding Nonemergency Transportation for MaineCare Members*.

LD 2128 introduces an element of choice and increased access to NET, allowing individuals who need to or have previously not been able to utilize NET without a companion, the option to bring along a companion for added support.

The option of bringing a companion holds promise for MaineCare members with complex needs to access NET as well as the services they are traveling to access, more safely.

Providers in our rural settings report that many of the individuals we support often find themselves undertaking journeys exceeding 100 miles one way for crucial appointments. While relying on NET for medical transportation, they are typically required to travel alone. While this may be suitable for some appointments, it's recognized for all of us that during important appointments, there is a benefit from the presence of a companion who can assist in interpreting information and provide valuable support. Ensuring that this choice is extended to those utilizing NET transportation services is beneficial and essential.

Importantly, it must be emphasized that this legislation does not mandate the presence of a companion for transport. Rather, it seeks to provide the option for individuals to have a companion when needed, recognizing the diverse and unique needs of individuals relying on NET services.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Cordes