

Testimony of Kim Humphrey

Founder and President, Community Connect Maine

Parent of Daniel Humphrey, Auburn Resident

Neither for nor Against - 2025 Supplemental Budget

Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services Committees,

My name is Kim Humphrey, and I live in Auburn. I am the proud mother of Daniel, a young man with severe autism who receives 24/7 residential care in Lewiston. I am also the founder of Community Connect Maine, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting the intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) community. Today, I testify both as a mother and on behalf of my organization.

Our vision at Community Connect Maine is simple: everyone deserves access to what they need, when they need it, to live a full life in their chosen community. This is both compassionate and cost-effective. However, the current Supplemental Budget threatens to undermine this vision.

While minimum wage increased this month, the budget fails to include the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) or meet the legal requirement of paying care workers 125% of minimum wage. At the same time, DHHS reinstated a stricter staffing ratio, placing additional financial strain on residential care providers in section 21 group homes. Long-standing group homes are closing, and the stability of Maine's disability system is at risk.

In recent sessions, you passed laws to stabilize this system by ensuring fair wages and timely rate adjustments. Providers based their 2025 budgets on the assumption these laws would be upheld. The care of my son—and many others—depends on you following through on these commitments.

Additionally, I am concerned about DHHS's Lifespan Waiver, which will make it harder for families to secure group home placements in the future. This disincentive to support existing group homes risks further destabilizing essential services for individuals with higher needs.

Maine is already grappling with individuals living in emergency rooms, hospitals, and out-of-state placements due to a lack of resources. Do we really want to make this problem worse?

I urge you to uphold the laws you've passed by restoring the COLA for MaineCare rates and maintaining the rate structures critical to the stability of this fragile system. Let's ensure that individuals like my son—and countless others—can continue to thrive in their communities.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this essential work.

Sincerely,

Kim Humphrey

Founder and President, Community Connect Maine