



2/4/2025

Senator Henry Ingwersen, Chair  
Representative Michele Meyer, Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
Cross Office Building, Room 209  
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 51, An Act to Increase Oversight of Fatalities of  
and Serious Injuries to Adults Subject to Public Guardianship

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing  
Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Barrett Littlefield and I am a senior staff attorney at Disability Rights  
Maine. DRM is Maine's designated Protection and Advocacy Agency, and our mission is  
to advance justice and equality by enforcing rights and expanding opportunities for  
people with disabilities in Maine. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony  
in support of LD 51.

Passage of LD 51 will ensure the meaningful inclusion of elder Mainers and adults with  
developmental disabilities who receive Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS)  
and/or are subject to public guardianship on Maine's Aging and Disability Mortality  
Review Panel. The Mortality Review Panel is incomplete and their work hindered  
without the assistance of a member with lived experience relevant to the Panel's  
mission: the possible prevention of serious injury and death of adult recipients of Home  
and Community-Based Services and adults subject to public guardianship. This is a  
matter of both health equity and common sense. Persons with said lived experience  
offer a vital perspective, without which the Mortality Review Panel is unable to  
comprehensively fulfill their duty to identify factors contributing to the mortality of  
Maine elders and individuals with developmental disabilities and the larger strengths  
and weaknesses of Maine's system of support for said persons. Most importantly, adults  
receiving elder and/or developmental support services can make connections between  
their own lived experience, structural determinants of health, and information  
concerning the deaths or serious injury of similarly-situated peers that could contribute

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MAINE'S PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY AGENCY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

to the prevention of serious injury or death in the future. Without the membership of an adult who receives the aforementioned support services, the Mortality Review Panel is denied the ability to fully understand the contexts of serious injuries and deaths under their review and, ultimately, to document essential prevention recommendations identifiable therein. In sum, LD 51 presents both an opportunity to better support Maine's Aging and Disability Mortality Review Panel in their current work and the greater possibility of forestalling preventable deaths in the future.

Additionally, DRM recommends the bill be amended to provide a community participation stipend to the adult service recipient member of the Mortality Review Panel whose time on the Panel is not otherwise compensated. Similar to the stipend provided to certain members of Maine's Maternal, Fetal, and Infant Mortality Review Panel, the community participation stipend would be available for participation in Panel meetings to the member with lived experience who, unlike other Panel members, would not be participating representing their professional role or expertise. Similarly, the stipend would aid in recruitment of and allow for the full participation of a new Mortality Review Panel member with lived experience.

For the foregoing reasons, DRM supports LD 51, and we urge this Committee to vote ought to pass as amended. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Barrett Littlefield, consisting of the initials 'B.L.' followed by a stylized 'L.F.' and a final flourish.

Barrett Littlefield, Esq.  
Senior Staff Attorney  
Disability Rights Maine