



Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

February 11, 2025

LD 210 "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027"

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine and the distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and the distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Health and Human Services

My name is Nancy Cronin and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC). I am here to testify in support of PART A Section Z185.

The Maine Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) works in partnership with people with disabilities, parents, advocates, and policy makers to promote independence, integration, and inclusion of all people with disabilities through advocacy, capacity building, and systems change throughout the state of Maine and on the national level.

Under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, MDDC is required to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities of all ages and their families participate in the design of, and have access to, needed community services, individualized support, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion in all facets of family and community life. **MDDC is committed to creating a Maine in which all people are valued and respected because we believe communities are stronger when everyone is included.**

Public and private systems can be burdensome and inefficient. MDDC helps keep the person in the center of the systems that are there to support them. We break down silos, streamline processes, and foster innovation and cross-agency collaboration to ensure that services are person-centered, accessible, and effective. **We help bureaucracy stay focused on what matters most—the person. We take a quality driven, systemic approach, we bridge gaps between agencies, advocate for**

person-centered solutions, and drive innovation that improves outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Some of our broad Impacts include:

- Improved systems for identification of children with developmental disabilities
- Innovated service delivery by paving the way for adults to direct their own services, increasing individuals' control of their lives and achieving cost efficiency.
- Increased leadership skills in people with developmental disabilities, instilling the confidence and skills for people to be decision makers in their own lives and contributors in their communities
- Engaged stakeholders from multiple systems efforts
- Engaged brought people together representing multiple systems, families, self-advocates, and other concerned parties to reach common ground and find workable solutions on challenging systemic problems such as ensuring early intervention for young children and addressing children and adults stuck in emergency departments.
- Improved healthcare for people with developmental disabilities in Maine by increasing capacity of medical professionals and creating low cost no cost solutions to care. MDDC has received national recognition for its high impact work from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Through policy leadership, community engagement, and strategic partnerships, MDDC is shaping a future where people with developmental disabilities in Maine live self-determined lives with the support they need. **When systems work better, Maine people thrive.**

Who We Are:

Councils on Developmental Disabilities were created through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) in 1970. Maine's DD Council has been advocating for individuals with Developmental Disabilities (DD) for over 40 years. The DD Council is a federally-funded, independent organization with members from across the state, including persons with disabilities, family members, and representatives of public and private agencies which provide services and/or funding for services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

How We Are Funded:

Every State and Territory in the United States of America has its own Developmental Disabilities Council. The Administration for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities provides each state with an allotment of federal funding to support Council work. In return, the federal government requires that each state provides funds to their DD Council via a State Match. (Typically our match requirement is between 130K-150K) Many minimum receiver States, like Maine, choose to augment their Council's work. A decade ago, I stood in front of this body and asked for about 160K annually. Your predecessors accepted that amount and that is what we have received annually in State funds for a decade.

This year, I asked DAFS to propose an increase in funds. I asked for \$240,232.00, a total for the biennium of \$480,465.00. You can see that there was an error in the budget document which used the total amount for each year. MDDC needs to ask you for an increase of about \$80,000. Could we use even more additional money? Yes. I know exactly what I would do with more money – which is put it into the community for groups like Speaking Up for Us or innovative parent groups working to improve the lives of children. But Maine can't afford to give the Council more than we need today. We need \$240K. We need it because costs have significantly increased from 10 years ago.

Today the DD Council is more important than ever. It is our job to stand where the system is and find ways to make effective, efficient suggestions that improve lives. In this tumultuous environment we should consider the importance of public-private partnerships. And, **it is more important than ever that we stand with people with developmental disabilities.** I ask you to fund \$240,232.00 annually to the Council so that we can do just that.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I am happy to take any questions.

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