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

*Re: LD 769: An Act Regarding Access to Behavioral Health  
Supports for Adults with Certain Disabilities*

Dear Senator Ingerswen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the  
Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am here to testify in support to LD 769, An Act Regarding Access to  
Behavioral Health Supports for Adults with Certain Disabilities.

My name is Joshua Weidemann, I am here today as a self-advocate to ask  
you to support the elimination of the planned use of restraints for adults  
with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Maine.

Restraints should never be a planned response to behavior. When people  
are placed in restrictive environments, like group homes, without access to  
other living options, it can cause anxiety and frustration. If someone is  
struggling, we should be asking: *What is really causing their behavior?* Is it  
their environment? Are their needs being met? Instead of assuming  
restraint is the answer, we should be looking at better support systems and  
better living situations that help reduce behaviors in the first place.

I'm not here to say that all group homes are bad, but I have lived in group  
homes where I was mistreated and not properly supported. When you feel  
trapped, unheard, and unsupported, it's natural to feel angry. It's natural to  
act out. And when the response to that frustration is restraint instead of real  
help, it only makes things worse.

Restraints don't just harm the person being held down—they affect everyone around them. Imagine watching your housemate being restrained. How would that make you feel? It creates fear, stress, and trauma for everyone in the home. It makes people question if they are safe with their staff.

Before restraining someone, do you know their history? Do you know what they have been through? Restraints can trigger past trauma and make behaviors worse, not better. In true emergencies, where there is no other option, interventions may be necessary to keep people safe. But planning to restrain someone ahead of time—before an issue even arises—is not a solution. It's not fair, and it's not right.

I urge you to pass LD 769 and eliminate the planned use of restraints. We deserve better support, better options, and better lives.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joshua Weidemann.