

March 18, 2025
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Testimony in support of LD 800 "An Act to Fund the Provision of Advocacy Services to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities"

Dear Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Roseanna Belanger and I am self-advocate and a person who lives with a disability. I am currently the Board Chair of Speaking Up For Us and I live in Presque Isle, ME.

I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 800 to support Disability Rights Maine to have an increase in funding because of the help and support they have given me as a person who lives with a disability.

Around 3 years ago my parents were my guardians. They became my guardians when I turned 18. I didn't think I would ever be able to live my life without them being my guardian. I became a board member of Speaking Up For Us and started to build my leadership skills and become more confident in my life. I finally realized I could be my own guardian.

Disability Rights Maine (DRM) helped me get through the court process to change my guardianship status. My parents ended up being supportive of me becoming my own guardian. I worked closely with Lauren at DRM. She helped me through the entire process. I was able to then work with Lauren to make a presentation and teach other self-advocates about the process to change their guardianship status.

DRM has helped a lot of self-advocates learn about their rights and advocate for themselves. I see them as a close ally and think it is important to keep funding them and increase their funding so they can continue to do the great work they do, like the work they did to help me become my own guardian.

Sincerely,

Roseanna Belanger
Presque Isle, ME

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