

David Lawrence
Portland
LD 834
March 17, 2025
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Testimony in support of LD 834 “An Act to Update the State Supplement to Supplemental Security Income”

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

Testimony in Support of LD 834

My name is David Lawrence, I live in Portland, and I am a person with a disability. I am also a member of Speaking Up for Us. I am here today to testify in support of LD 834 because this bill would make a significant difference in my life and the lives of many others with disabilities.

Currently, individuals with disabilities who rely on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) struggle to keep up with the rising cost of living. This bill is important to me because, as expenses continue to rise, the financial gap between people with disabilities and those without is growing wider. The amount of support we receive has not kept up with inflation, making it difficult for many of us to afford basic necessities.

If this bill passes, it would allow me to have a little more financial security each month. Instead of constantly having to save and stretch every dollar, I would be able to cover my essential expenses more comfortably. It would also give me the ability to travel and participate in activities that help me engage with my community—something that has been especially difficult after the pandemic. Many people with disabilities are still facing a kind of "lockdown," not because of any ongoing health crisis, but simply because we cannot afford to get out and do things.

This bill would help others in the same situation as me. Anyone living on a fixed income due to a disability knows how hard it is to make ends meet. Providing more financial support would give people with disabilities a better quality of life and help close the financial gap between us and those without disabilities.

The current financial support system has not been meaningfully updated since 1974. That was a lifetime ago in terms of economic change. The cost of living has increased dramatically since then, and yet, disability benefits have not kept pace. These adjustments should happen regularly, just as other financial policies are updated to reflect inflation and rising costs.

I want to emphasize that I am not asking for people with disabilities to receive more than what is fair, but rather for a system that keeps us from falling further behind. We deserve the ability to live with dignity, just like anyone else.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I appreciate your time and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

David Lawrence

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