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March 18, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Chair  
Representative Meyer, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 800 – *An Act to Fund the Provision of Advocacy Services to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities*

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to provide information as you deliberate LD 800, *An Act to Fund the Provision of Advocacy Services to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities*.

This bill would appropriate additional ongoing funding for Disability Rights Maine (DRM) to provide advocacy services to persons with intellectual disabilities. The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) contracts with DRM to provide statewide, individual-level advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities or autism. DRM provides direct representation, responds to reported rights violations, attends meetings to review behavior and safety plans, attends person-centered planning meetings, and conducts regular outreach and training statewide. In 2023, DRM was awarded American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funding by OADS to launch and expand self-advocacy for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities Maine. These services will end in June 2025.

The number of people OADS serves has grown over the last several years. Since January of 2019, over 2,000 people have been added to the MaineCare Sections 21 and 29 Home and Community Based Services waiver programs, serving individuals with intellectual disabilities or autism.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions during your deliberation of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Paul Saucier", is placed above the printed name.

Paul Saucier, Director  
Office of Aging and Disability Services  
Maine Department of Health and Human Services