

March 31, 2025

100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

**Testimony To Support the House Bill LD 977: Resolve, Requiring the Maine Health Data Organization to Develop a Plan for Measuring Gaps in Home and Community-based Services.**

Dear Representative Cluchey and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Regina Bowie, I am a self-advocate, and I live in Presque Isle, I am also a member of Speaking Up For Us, Maine's Self-Advocacy Network and I am currently a board member of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council. I am here today to speak in support of **House Bill LD 977: Resolve, Requiring the Maine Health Data Organization to Develop a Plan for Measuring Gaps in Home and Community-based Services.**

This bill is critical because it ensures that the data collected on home and community-based services is accurate and thorough. With the right data, we can identify gaps in individualized plans and make the necessary adjustments to provide the services that people genuinely need. As our needs change over time, having access to accurate data will allow services to adapt accordingly.

There are significant gaps in services that many people, including myself, depend on. This legislation would gather data to show exactly what services individuals need. It would also help us understand how to communicate these needs more effectively and adapt services to meet them. On a personal note, I was diagnosed later in life, and having access to accurate data could have expedited the support I needed. With this bill, others might not have to face the same delays.

By having a system to track and measure gaps in services, teams will be able to identify why certain individuals are not receiving the support they need and address those shortcomings. For people like me, this could mean getting the right services at the right time, especially when life circumstances or health needs change. For instance, if someone is diagnosed later in life, this data could flag the need for immediate services and ensure timely support.

Accurate data will enable agencies and educators to better understand and meet the needs of all individuals requiring services. It will also foster the development of similar programs across the state and nation. This could reduce isolation, improve mental health, and ensure that people have access to the transportation and community support they need. Most importantly, it will allow everyone to be an active part of their community and improve their overall quality of life.

The only way this legislation could have a negative impact is if the data is collected or interpreted incorrectly. That's why it's crucial to educate those handling the data to ensure it is accurate and meaningful. Misinterpreted data could lead to underserved individuals and communities, which is what we are striving to prevent.

In conclusion, this program has the potential to significantly improve the lives of individuals with disabilities, as long as the data is managed and interpreted correctly. It's vital for people of all ages, from toddlers to older adults, to receive appropriate, individualized services based on accurate information. This bill ensures a better future for everyone in our community.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am available to answer questions by email.

Sincerely,

Regina Bowie  
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