



April 4, 2025

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

Re: LD 263, Resolve, to Provide Rural Nonmedical Transportation Services to the Elderly and Adults with Disabilities Receiving Home and Community Benefits Under MaineCare

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Sara Squires and I am the Public Policy Director for Disability Rights Maine (DRM), Maine's designated protection and advocacy agency for people with disabilities. On behalf of DRM and the individuals we serve, I want to thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of LD 263, which directs the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a pilot project to provide older Mainers and those with disabilities up to \$2,000 toward non-medical transportation and to submit an evaluation of the pilot project by December 3, 2025.

The Section 19 waiver allows individuals who qualify for nursing facility level of care to receive services in their homes and communities instead of institutional settings. The target population for this waiver is elderly adults and other adults with disabilities.

It is no secret that transportation is a significant barrier that prevents adults with disabilities from achieving full community inclusion. When people with disabilities are isolated, society as a whole suffers a detriment—it is deprived of citizens who can contribute to the greater good. Lack of accessible, affordable transportation inhibits an individual's ability to be an employee, a consumer, a volunteer, a friend, a significant other, and a member of their community. Transportation provides people with disabilities greater independence and enables them to delay or avoid institutionalization.

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MAINE'S PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY AGENCY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Access to transportation that will allow individuals receiving Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) to have full community inclusion is not just a good idea; it is a federal mandate. The HCBS Settings Rule requires that all individuals who receive these services have the same access to the community as individuals not receiving services. Transportation is a crucial component of compliance with Settings Rule.

For the foregoing reasons, DRM supports LD 263, which will enable Maine to explore ways to improve transportation for individuals with disabilities receiving Home- and Community-Based Services.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara R. Squires", with a stylized circular flourish at the end.

Sara R. Squires
Public Policy Director