

April 8, 2025

RE: LD1397 An Act to Fund Community-based Organizations to Prevent and Reduce the Risk of Children's Involvement in the Child Welfare System

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

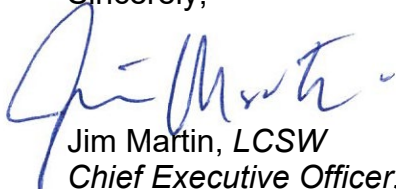
My name is Jim Martin, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of Community Concepts, Inc., a Community Action Agency primarily serving Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties. CCI helps individuals increase their self-sufficiency and stability through dozens of programs, including housing, energy support, behavioral health services, childcare and Head Start services, financial coaching, and economic development. Today, I write supporting LD1397, An Act to Fund Community-based Organizations to Prevent and Reduce the Risk of Children's Involvement in the Child Welfare System.

As the former director of the Office of Child and Family Services, I am acutely aware of the risks and dangers affecting children and families in our state. During my tenure in that position, I spearheaded several initiatives to combat child abuse and neglect, in particular, initiatives promoting best practices that allowed parents to reunify with their children successfully. One of the largest challenges that I faced in that work was the identification of programs and services that showed positive outcomes. While several services were available, time and time again, I would see parents cycle through the system with failed attempts at treatment, stability, and, ultimately, reunification. Quite simply, there are not enough cost-effective programs in Maine that demonstrate positive outcomes with regard to supporting people in need and, more importantly, programs that support the entire family unit.

As a state, we must continue to do everything we can to support and expand programs that have positive results. We must also take preventative measures to protect and teach the next generation. I urge you to support LD1397.

I would be happy to answer any questions you have and make myself available if that would be helpful.

Sincerely,



Jim Martin, LCSW
Chief Executive Officer, Community Concepts