

Testimony of Jessica Cyr, resident of Kittery, Maine

Supporting: LD 1451 An Act to Advance Coordination of Community Transportation - Sponsored by Senator Mike Tipping

April 17, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

My name is Jessica Cyr, and I am a resident of Kittery, Maine. I support LD 1451 and appreciate Senator Tipping and the other cosponsors for bringing this legislation forward.

I am here to speak as a disability advocate as I am a quadriplegic wheelchair user, but I am also a busy parent and active member of my community. When I was first injured in 2017, I was trying to just survive and attempt to get back to something of the life I had before my traumatic accident hurled me into this foreign body and new world of a person with a disability. I quickly learned even before being discharged from a month-long rehabilitation stay in Massachusetts, that even getting a ride home as a new wheelchair user was going to be a challenge. There are so many new considerations that I had to keep in mind such as the challenge of transporting me in my power wheelchair. I naively thought that our digital world would have an easy to find app I could download to help me get a ride, but sadly it's not as easy as that. Later I learned that there was no phone number or streamlined database I could find when I needed a simple and short 1-mile drive to my son's baseball game, a 3-mile ride to go shopping or more urgently when my wheelchair accessible van broke down on the highway. In that instance, even emergency responders including AAA and state police were at a loss as to how to find a non-emergency ride home from the side of the highway. I was literally stranded on the side of the highway because there was no system in place to transport me in my power wheelchair, apart from calling an ambulance when I had no medical issue.

My hope is that having this streamlined system, including Mobility Management Hubs, will provide Mainers with a more efficient way to get a ride when they need it. I have learned after countless hours of personal research about the different transportation options that are available, but doesn't it make more sense to centralize our efforts into a coordinated system where different types of transportation options are easy to find? A phone number to call or a web site to access where I can get assistance setting up a ride to a medical appointment or just a ride to the library provided by a volunteer driver.

Thank you for listening to my perspective. Please vote Ought to Pass.

Thanks again,
Jessica Cyr

Jessica Cyr
Kittery
LD 1451

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