

April 21, 2025

Subject: LD 1606 An Act to Require Data Collection and Major Substantive Rulemaking for the Lifespan Waiver Providing Home and Community-based Services for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder or Other Related Conditions: Testimony

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer and distinguished, members of Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Hello, my name is Sally Michaud. I live in Vassalboro, Maine in Kennebec County. I'm a mother of a young 20-year-old adult with a significant traumatic brain injury and an intellectual disability with complex needs. He lives in our home through shared living. I am writing in support of LD1606,

My son has had challenges from infancy as he was shaken at six weeks of age. Throughout his lifetime his needs have varied as he has grown and developed. He has participated in section 28 services as a child. My son participated in Vocational Rehab during his sophomore year in high school and was placed in a job for the summer. He struggled to engaged socially with his peers and has been dismissed from his high school at the beginning of his junior year for inappropriate behavior. Three months later he began services at Kennebec Club house in Augusta. After a few weeks he was asked to leave due to inappropriate behavior. Shortly after that he was began working with a new Vocational Rehab counselor and employment specialist at Goodwill Industries. In April he was placed in the same job position he worked in high school working in maintenance. His Goodwill adviser visited him once during this time for a very brief check in. He was never given job coaching or supervision. He worked one on one with a man in charge of maintenance. They spent much of their time working alone on the property or driving to do work at other properties owned by business owners. One morning in August my son refused to get up for work. He refused to call his supervisor that he couldn't make it. He refused to talk or give any explanation other than he wasn't going back. In November of that year, the maintenance supervisor was murdered. The man who confessed to the killing stated he found out this man was on the sex offender registry. The press all stated there was no evidence of this however after some research, I discovered this man with whom my vulnerable son was placed and left on his own was a convicted sex offender. I spoke with people at Vocation Rehab and Goodwill. They said they were sorry but they have no way of knowing if other employees have a criminal history. Since that time, my son has had meetings with vocation rehab that end with "lets meet in 3 months. In the meantime, my son hasn't been helped with a job position since August of 2023. During one meeting they decided to have him work with a career exploration counselor. He visited 2 businesses and she observed him volunteering at church calling that a 3<sup>rd</sup> job tour. No one did prep work to

prepare him to ask questions. My son doesn't have the intellectual capability to know what to ask or how to answer open ended questions. We reconvened with Voc Rehab and they want him to do another round of career exploration. I found it very frustrating that they can not protect my son when placing him in employment situations and they are not skilled in understanding his disability.

The proposed Lifespan Waiver needs skilled, educated individuals to help adults with intellectual and other disabilities learn essential life, social, and job skills. Improving oversight of what works and addressing flaws will increase its success. Please support LD1606 to ensure it is effectively implemented for all adults with I/DD.

This bill matters because it builds in accountability before problems arise. I urge you to support it to ensure people like my son are not left behind as the system changes.

Sincerely,

Sally Michaud