

**Center for Community  
Inclusion  
& Disability Studies**

*Maine's University Center for  
Excellence in Developmental  
Disabilities Education, Research  
and Service (UCEDD)*



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April 23, 2025

Re: Testimony FOR LD 1097 “An Act to Provide De-escalation and Behavior Intervention Training for School Personnel”

Chair Rafferty, Chair Murphy, Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Alan Cobo-Lewis. I live in Orono. I am director of the Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies (CCIDS) at the University of Maine.

CCIDS is Maine’s federally funded University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD, pronounced “YOU-said”), authorized by the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (“DD Act”). The purpose of the national network of UCEDDs is to provide leadership in advise federal state and community policy leaders about, and promote opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination, be independent, be productive, and be integrated and included in all facets of community life. Part of the federal mandate of CCIDS is to educate and advise policymakers, including members of the state legislature. Consistent with CCIDS responsibilities under the DD Act and consistent with University of Maine Board of Trustees policies [212](#) and [214](#), I am submitting material pertaining to LD 1248 for myself and for CCIDS, not for the University of Maine or the University of Maine System as a whole.

Although students with disabilities are vastly disproportionately subject to restraint and seclusion, the recent MEPRI report on challenging student behavior<sup>1</sup> indicated that “Challenging behavior is as prevalent in the general education population as it is in the special education population in Maine.” This suggests that all teachers could benefit from professional development in evidence-based approaches to behavior.

Although existing law at [20-A MRS §4014\(4\)](#) requires the Maine Department of Education to provide technical assistance to support evidence-based programs that reduce the likelihood of physical restraint or seclusion and support students in reducing behavior that can result in physical restraint or seclusion, it does not require schools or school personnel to access these important resources.

LD 1097 is more comprehensive. It is an excellent step to support schools, school personnel, and students.

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<sup>1</sup> Scheibel, G., Wilkinson, S., Fairman, J. C., & Tariq, A. R. (2025, March). Maine K-12 educator and administrator experiences managing challenging student behavior in schools. Maine Education Policy Research Institute.  
<https://mepri.maine.edu/files/2025/03/MEPRI-Report-on-Challenging-Student-Behavior-March-2025.pdf>

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