

April 23, 2025

Chair Ingwersen, Chair Meyer, Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Alan Cobo-Lewis. I live in Orono. I am testifying FOR LD 1634, "An Act Regarding MaineCare Waiting Lists".

I have two young adult sons, one of whom has autism, who needs significant services and supports, and who is supported by the Section 21 Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver.

You are surely aware of the long waiting lists that Mainers with disabilities have experienced in order to get access to the comprehensive Section 21 Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver. In years not so distant past, there has even been a long waiting list to get access to the more modest Section 29 HCBS supports waiver.

But it is less well known that, even when a person isn't on the wait list the a needed waiver, they still can go without waiver-funded support.

This happened to my son, whose challenges were so significant that he qualified for the Section 21 waiver on reaching his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Thankfully, he never spent a day on the Section 21 wait list.

And yet he went fully 7 months before receiving any waiver-funded direct support!

Contacts all the way up to the Governor's office did not resolve the issue for months and months and months.

Even though federal Medicaid regulation requires states to maintain a sufficiently robust provider pool such that Medicaid clients can actually access the service!

Now, three years later, he is succeeding and has good access to the community. But only because he is receiving the support he needs from the Section 21 waiver.

LD 1634 would set a 6-month limit on effective denial of access. And it would require report to the Legislature and corrective action to address any such denials.

These are reasonable requirements. I hope you'll support the bill.