



## **Testimony In Support of**

### **LD 1677 An Act to Establish the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Prevention and Support Program**

**Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
May 2, 2025**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Laura Cordes, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Maine Association for Community Service Providers (MACSP). MACSP represents nearly 100 agencies that deliver person-centered educational, vocational, residential, and community-based supports—as well as specialized care—to children and adults with intellectual disabilities, autism, and brain injuries. These services help individuals live full, meaningful lives in their communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 1677, *An Act to Establish the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Prevention and Support Program*.

Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are disproportionately affected by dementia. Research published by the National Institutes of Health indicates that individuals with IDD are up to five times more likely to develop dementia than their peers in the general population. Moreover, the onset often occurs earlier and progresses more rapidly—particularly among people with Down syndrome, who frequently experience symptoms in their 50s.

Unfortunately, the current service landscape is not adequately equipped to support individuals who are dually diagnosed with IDD and dementia. Providers, family members, and guardians are often unprepared for the swift decline, and as a result, individuals are too often placed in nursing homes or memory care facilities that lack specialized training in supporting people with IDD. Many memory care settings are designed for aging adults without developmental disabilities and are ill-suited to meet these complex and intersecting needs.

Additionally, many individuals with IDD live at home with aging parents or caregivers. When those caregivers themselves are diagnosed with dementia or Alzheimer's disease, it can lead to a secondary crisis that compounds the vulnerability of the individual with IDD.

There is an urgent need for a coordinated, inclusive approach. LD 1677 and the proposed Healthy Brain Initiative Council would offer a critical opportunity to study and respond to the unique needs of individuals with dementia—particularly those with IDD—through better data, service design, public health planning, and workforce training.

We urge you to support LD 1677 to ensure that the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are fully represented in this important work.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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