



Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

May 15, 2025

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: please accept this testimony Support of LD 1859, An Act to Improve Access to Child Care and Early Childhood Education by Establishing Regional resource Hubs.

My name is Nancy Cronin, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council¹. I stand here in support of LD 1859 as it fills a critical need for families to be able to access childcare and preschool programs. There is no doubt in our mind that this bill fills a critical gap.

I encourage the committee to formalize a connection between this regional hub and the regional support and service hubs that were codified within Title 20-A, Part 4 §1 Chapter 203 Sub 1 §7209-A.5. two years ago. That statute defines the transition of Child Developmental Services early education 3-5 programs for eligible children with disabilities to be conducted and overseen by local school districts. After the transition to the local school system the Child Developmental Services office is to transform into regional support and service hubs to support schools to fulfill their duties.

These two regional hubs will complement each other as long as they are coordinated. The families whose children receive services through early education programs will also need childcare. It is important that the two regional support hubs talk together to ensure coordinated support for all families. I encourage this committee to, however appropriately, make clear that these two regional service hubs should formally coordinate.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Nancy Cronin
Maine Developmental Disabilities Council.

¹ Councils on Developmental Disabilities were created through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) in 1970. Maine's DD Council has been advocating with and for individuals with developmental disabilities for over 50 years. The DD Council is a federally funded, independent organization with members from across the state, including persons with disabilities, family members, and representatives of public and private agencies which provide services and/or funding for services for individuals with developmental disabilities. As required in federal law, we are involved in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities, with the goal that individuals with developmental and other disabilities of all ages are fully included, integrated, and involved in their communities and the decisions impacting their lives.