



2025 - 2026

LD 2117: An Act To Extend the Time Allowed To Fill Vacancies in Certain Residential Settings **TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO:** Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

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Mission: To support adults and children with disabilities to achieve full and inclusive lives in their chosen communities.

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Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 2117.

My name is Brett Bulmer, and I serve as Executive Director of Independence Association, a Brunswick-based nonprofit organization that provides residential and community-based services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities across Maine.

I am writing in strong support of LD 2117 because it addresses a very practical problem in our system: the pressure to fill residential vacancies quickly, often before it is clear whether a potential placement is truly a good fit.

Who you live with matters. If you were selecting a roommate, you would expect the time and freedom to make a thoughtful decision, because it directly affects your quality of life. **People with disabilities deserve the same respect and consideration.**

Under current rules for 2-person homes, providers are sometimes forced to fill vacant beds within relatively short timeframes to remain in compliance. While agencies work hard to make thoughtful placements, these timelines can lead to decisions before compatibility is fully understood. This increases the risk of placing someone in a home that does not meet their needs, or pairing individuals who are not well matched.

Residential placements succeed or fail largely based on compatibility. When matches are thoughtful and person-centered, homes tend to be more stable, routines are maintained, and individuals experience greater safety and quality of life. When placements are rushed, the result is often increased behavioral challenges, emotional distress, staff burnout, and, in some cases, placement breakdowns that are disruptive and traumatic for everyone involved.

LD 2117 provides modest but important flexibility in 2-person homes by extending the amount of time providers have to identify a suitable housemate before eviction notices are triggered for remaining residents. This is particularly important for individuals who have lived in their homes for many years and who may face significant distress or regression if forced to relocate solely because a compatible roommate cannot be found quickly enough.

The bill also includes provisions extending the length of time before eviction when active matching efforts are underway, as well as allowing additional time for bed holds during hospitalizations. Together, these changes reduce the risk of unnecessary displacement following medical events and support continuity of care.

These adjustments promote more person-centered decision-making. They allow time to properly assess compatibility, involve individuals in decisions about their living environment, prepare staff and homes appropriately, and reduce the likelihood of failed placements and emergency relocations.

More time to fill vacancies is not about delaying services. It is about making placements that are sustainable, respectful, and in the best interests of the people we support.

I respectfully urge the committee to support LD 2117. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brett Bulmer, Executive Director

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