

Testimony regarding the Governor's Supplemental Budget for the Maine Developmental Services Oversight and Advisory Board- section Z363

To the Esteemed Member of the Health and Human Services Committee and the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee

My name is Rory Robb and I am a member of the MDSOAB. I am in support of Section Z363. I appreciate your valuable time and therefore will keep it short as my colleagues are also testifying. I began this volunteer job as a member of the Consumer Advisory Board when the system providing services for adults with Intellectual Disabilities and/or Autism was under a federal lawsuit. We oversaw a detailed plan of correction from OADS and worked closely with the Courtmaster, Clarence Sundrum. Once the state came into compliance in 2010, the legislature appointed a Board- the MDSOAB- to continue to oversee the services and work with OADS to maintain compliance. I was appointed to this Board by the Governor and the new legislation.

I spent over 35 years as a Provider of services as well as guardian to my sister who receives services in southern Maine. Within these two roles I believe I have good experience working within the service delivery system. We have developed a good working relationship with members of OADS. We review system data provided to us and point out unmet needs within the system and often ways to meet those needs (examples will be included in our annual report to the legislator, Commissioner and Governor). Unfortunately, that list continues to grow, as does needed data and therefore increases our workload. We are a 15 member volunteer board with a paid Executive Director and contracted part-time bookkeeper. Board members sit on committees as well as review and advise on data, unmet needs, and systemic issues. I and others, recently worked on a Statewide Committee for the past year in order to move our system out of restraints and Behavior Management Plans.

We have been flat- funded since before **2010** which has made it impossible to keep up with current salary ranges as well as needed personnel. We once had a person to oversee the Correspondent Program which we can no longer afford. That program locates and assigns volunteers to provide advocacy with and for individuals who do not have anyone in their lives able to do this. I would ask you to imagine that you have no unpaid individuals to assist you with life decisions and support with problems we all encounter.

We need to hire a new Executive Director and cannot offer a competitive salary or benefits for a position that stands alone to do all tasks- such as policy review, legislative bill and regulatory tracking and testimony, board management, conducting Public Forums, obtaining data from OADS and administrative tasks (to name a few). Most recently we have been very fortunate to have an individual willing to take on this task without regard to compensation. Undoubtedly we will not have that luxury in our upcoming hiring process. We also have realized that this should be 1.5 positions, in order to separate out tasks and expertise when hiring for very different roles.

This is not a Board that any of us dreamed up and established. As has been identified, it was established by the legislature and therefore wisely mandating an oversight of services for adults with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism. As a family member, I am extremely happy that there is oversight of my sister's services through a Board that has the responsibility to report unmet needs to those- the legislature, Commissioner and leaders of OADS- who have the power to make changes when needed in our delivery service system. So to all of you, I say thank you very much!

I would hope in this ever-increasing financial climate, it would appear reasonable that after over 16 years, a budget increase, as identified, is very much warranted. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Rory Robb

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