

David Cowing
Woolwich
LD 2212

Dear Senator Rotondo, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Gattine, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services,

I am taking this opportunity to write to you in support of LD 2122, the Governor's Supplemental Budget, An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027.

My name is David Cowing and I live in Woolwich. I am also a member of the MDSOAB. My son has an intellectual disability as well as other disabilities, including significant mental health challenges. He lives in a group home in Bath. Though a current family medical emergency prevents me from attending the hearing on LD 2122, I wanted to be sure to send this brief note because of how strongly I, and the rest of my family, feel about its careful consideration.

Fully funding COLAs for Direct Support Workers has a direct bearing on my son's quality of life at his group home as well as with his participation in the local community. His mental health is significantly affected by not knowing who will be working at his home, something that frequently happens and creates real problems for him. Successful community access is highly dependent on skilled staff, and problems arise when staff who do not know him well are asked to provide the support he requires. I believe there is a direct relationship between consistency of skilled staffing at his home and providing a living wage to the Direct Support Professionals who support him. I ask that you support fully funding COLAs for DSPs in the supplemental budget.

Also, as a father and member of the MDSOAB, I am acutely aware of the important role the MDSOAB can play in ensuring Mainers with developmental disabilities are able to access quality community-based services. As the only statutorily named entity responsible for oversight, it is impossible to fulfill this important role with the very limited staff time currently available. Independent oversight of our support system is a necessity given the growing number of providers and people living in smaller homes, often without skilled supervision. We need to recognize that Mainers like my son with IDD and mental health challenges are among the most vulnerable of our citizens. Providing the MDSOAB with the resources it needs to fulfill its mission is critical.

I want to thank members of both committees for restoring a partial COLA in last year's budget, as well as for the support you've shown in the past for Mainers with IDD and autism. I ask that you continue to demonstrate your support for providing quality services to Mainers with disabilities by supporting LD 2122.

Thank you,
David Cowing
Woolwich