



Testimony in Support of LD 479

“An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Membership of the Palliative Care and Quality of Life Interdisciplinary Advisory Council”

presented by

Kandyce Powell MSN

Executive Director, Maine Hospice Council, Inc.

before

Health and Human Services Committee

March 15, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Kandyce Powell, Executive Director of the Maine Hospice Council. I am pleased to be with you today to speak in support of LD 479, “An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Membership of the Palliative Care and Quality of Life Interdisciplinary Advisory Council”.

In 2015, the Maine Hospice Council worked in collaboration with ACS CAN to author LD 479. Support came from many healthcare organizations and individuals who realized the high quality, cost-effective nature of providing an interdisciplinary approach to palliative care earlier upstream for a patient and family living with serious illness. However, they also realized many patients and families were not being offered the service. In addition, many institutions did not offer a comprehensive palliative care program, or any program at all. As well, healthcare professionals did not understand what palliative care was, nor the value it could offer patients and families.

The Advisory Council presently has 13 voting members appointed for three-year terms. These appointees are selected by Legislative leadership, the Governor and the Maine Hospice Council. A fourteenth non-voting member is listed in statute as the “convening authority”. The appointed members are experienced palliative care professionals representing various disciplines. The Advisory Council members convene approximately four times a year, with all meetings open to the public. Many guests have been invited over the past seven years, as well as interns and other interested parties. Their input has been invaluable.

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However, when the legislation was written, we were remiss in not listing an official designation for one of the most important categories, that of the consumer of palliative care. Therefore, we are asking you to support an amendment to the original statute, which would designate a 15th seat in recognition of the consumer. The appointing authority for an official “Consumer Seat” would be the made by the Governor of Maine.

Thank you for considering our request!

With my sincere respect and appreciation,

Kandyce Powell

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