



**Ed Crockett**

128 Bramblewood Drive  
Portland, ME 04103  
Residence: (207) 797-8371  
[Ed.Crockett@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Ed.Crockett@legislature.maine.gov)

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002  
(207) 287-1400  
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

March 20, 2023

*Testimony of Representative Ed Crockett Introducing*

***LD 659, An Act to Promote Seamless and Flexible Home and Community Supports Across the Lifespan for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities or Autism***

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and esteemed colleagues on the Health and Human Services Committee: I'm Ed Crockett and I represent House District 112, which includes part of Portland and part of Falmouth. I am here today to introduce LD 659, *An Act to Promote Seamless and Flexible Home and Community Supports Across the Lifespan for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities or Autism*. More precisely, this bill outlines the work the Department of Health and Human Services will do to implement a "Lifespan waiver" to improve access to needed services for our friends and family with intellectual and developmental disabilities or Autism.

I understand that you've heard a lot about the Lifespan waiver in this Committee, and I'll leave the detailed description of this work to the Department of Health and Human Services who will testify after me. What I hope to reiterate and convey is this: whether through constituents, family, friends or neighbors, we've all heard about how the system of supports for people with IDD and Autism needs improvement. We've heard that it can be too rigid, that waitlists create anxiety and limit access to services, and that it doesn't recognize the individual needs that each of our loved ones have.

I want to thank the department for asking me to sponsor this bill. I'd also like to thank Reps. Meyer, Madigan, and Zager for directing me to the department last winter when my severely autistic nephew Riley, now 30, experienced multiple trips to the ER. His experience at Maine Med opened my eyes to the lack of services available to this community. I learned that individuals whose primary diagnosis is autism are stuck, because there isn't any temporary or permanent shelter available to them past the age of 21. Fortunately Riley has parents that are present and amazing caregivers. So Riley will have safe shelter as long as my brother and sister-in-law who are both educators and soon to hit their seventies remain healthy and able to care for him. That got me thinking about what happens to young people (over 21) that don't have anyone to care for them? Which someday could be my nephew. The answer sadly is, that without access to the right services these disadvantaged individuals can end up homeless and on the street. I find that unconscionable and we must be better. That's why, when the Department asked, I was ecstatic to sponsor this bill.

Lifespan waiver services, when implemented, will start younger, as early as age 14, be more flexible and responsive to individual needs, and make sure that Maine is on a path to the best system of services and supports that we can provide for this population. You should also know what this bill will not do: it will not force anyone currently receiving Sections 21 or 29 to give up or lose those services. While Lifespan, like any one policy, is no panacea to all our challenges, it will offer a better, simpler, more personalized and innovative structure for this population.

Engagement with impacted people: clients, their families and support systems, providers, and other stakeholders – is absolutely critical. This bill will require that the Department convene a Lifespan Stakeholder Advisory Group and that it remain a venue for this work all the way through the two phases of implementation.

I'm very excited that there is not a fiscal note on this bill. This Committee already unanimously approved the budget initiative associated with the Lifespan waiver, so this bill laying out the framework will not require a fiscal note. Now if it did, I'd still be asking, but this is better. So, thank you for that.

This work is so crucial and infinitely important, and I'm proud that the Department is willing to take the necessary steps to ensure public and Legislative engagement and feedback into this process as it is being developed. Thank you for your support of this work, and I hope you will pass this bill on behalf of the folks who will benefit from a Lifespan waiver in Maine.

Happy to take any questions.