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Testimony of Rep. Poppy Arford in support of
LD 473, Resolve, to Expand the Eligibility for and Increase the Number of Hours of Applied Behavior Analysis Services Authorized by the MaineCare Program
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Representative Poppy Arford. I proudly serve House District 101 in Brunswick. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to share my support for **LD 473, Resolve to Expand the Eligibility for and Increase the Number of Hours of Applied Behavior Analysis Services Authorized by the MaineCare Program.**

As a representative of the Brunswick community, I recognize and am grateful for the excellent work of my constituent organization, the Independence Association, whom I consider content experts on LD 473. In recognition that they are present this afternoon to testify, I will limit my comments to a brief reporting of why I strongly support the bill.

One of the key factors is that LD 473 will save money, because Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is an evidence-based approach that teaches staff how to address people with complex behavioral challenges from the perspective of positive behavioral supports. This proven service reduces the need for hospitalization or sending them out of state.

ABA also provides people with complex behavioral challenges more independence, because staff are trained how to reduce inappropriate behaviors and replace them with socially appropriate ones. Importantly, when staff are trained on these positive support strategies, it reduces injuries of both staff and the people served.

If passed, this bill will create new levels of independence for individuals with complex behavioral needs, reduce the number of individuals stranded in emergency rooms, and potentially reduce the number of Maine citizens who are being served out of state because providers in Maine refuse to serve them or lack the knowledge as to the best approach for addressing their needs.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments, and I urge you to vote the bill Ought to Pass.