



Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

April 13, 2023

Testimony in **Support** of LD 1309, An Act to Clarify Requirements for Payment of tuition for Children with Disabilities by the Department of Education's Child Development Services System.

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and the distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Nancy Cronin, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council.¹ It is a rare occasion for the Maine DD Council to testify in favor of a funding bill. We usually stay out of it. But this is different. This bill truly is about equity, fairness, and doing what is right. If you ask a business to provide a service, you pay them for it.

Special Purpose Private schools receive tuition from school districts to provide Specially Designed Instruction. This is fair because the school districts are paying for the educational programming of the children that they send. Why wouldn't CDS do the same for the children they send to Special Purpose Preschools?

I have heard that these providers are strongly encouraged to bill MaineCare for payment. I agree that maximizing Medicaid is important but only for reimbursement for medical services provided. MaineCare pays for medically necessary services. It is CDS' responsibility to pay for Specially Designed Instruction when they tuition students to receive educational programming by Special Purpose Preschools.

Our system of services for young children is in a very precarious position. For young children with severe disability, today, Special Purpose Preschools is where they will receive the interventions that they need to be ready for school. Maine can't afford to lose any more

¹ Councils on Developmental Disabilities were created through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) in 1970. Maine's DD Council has been advocating with and for individuals with developmental disabilities for over 50 years. The DD Council is a federally funded, independent organization with members from across the state, including persons with disabilities, family members, and representatives of public and private agencies which provide services and/or funding for services for individuals with developmental disabilities. As required in federal law, we are involved in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities, with the goal that individuals with developmental and other disabilities of all ages are fully included, integrated, and involved in their communities and the decisions impacting their lives.

experts of early intervention. Our children cannot afford to lose more pieces of our already broken system.

This is a simple bill. The Sponsor is asking you to hold CDS accountable just like any one of us would be. If you contract for a service, you pay for it. It is not okay to simply default.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input and I am available for any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Doe" or similar, written in a cursive style.