

April 27, 2023
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Testimony in support of LD 1666 “An Act to Modernize the State Supplement to Supplemental Security Income by Updating the State Supplement and Removing Marriage Disincentives”

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Jon McGovern, I am a self-advocate and I live in Bangor. I am also an employee of Speaking Up For Us, Maine’s Self-Advocacy Network. I am in support of LD 1666 to make SSI modern and remove the marriage penalty.

I have been working on the issue of SSI reform and eliminating the marriage penalty on a state and federal level because it is a big passion of mine. I do want to see the marriage penalty eliminated. It is a big issue for people who have lost their income because of marriage to get it back. I would like to see nobody lose their benefits and for those who have lost benefits to get them back. It is hard to go from having an income all the way straight down to zero.

There are people out there like me, who want to be able to get married. Right now, the marriage penalty is damaging to them because they lose income and benefits. There is not way to deal with the current cost of living increases. They can’t use money to cover other costs they may have for health care, or dental care that isn’t covered by insurance. It is hard for them to get married because they will lose benefits.

It would help people who live with disabilities in Maine if the marriage penalty would go away. I like in the bill that Maine would raise the cost of the state’s SSI contribution from \$8 individual and \$12 couple to \$65 individual and \$130 couple. This would make it easier for people and they would get to keep some income if they are married.

I ask the committee to see this from the point of view of someone who relies on this income. SSI helps people instead of hurts people with disabilities. I think we should eliminate the marriage penalty so people can get married just like everyone else. They need to be able to keep all their benefits so they can have a stable place to live and be in their community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jon McGovern
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