

Oral Testimony of Kim Humphrey

Founder and President, Community Connect Maine

Parent of Daniel Humphrey, Auburn Resident

Against: Bi-Annual Budget- UU-2 and UU-3 – Changes to COLA and Rate Determination

Good Afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services,

My name is Kim Humphrey. I am from Auburn and serve as the founder and president of Community Connect Maine. I am also the mother of Daniel, an adult with severe autism, bipolar disorder, and a seizure disorder.

Monday was my son Daniel's 36th birthday. The Home and Community-Based Service Waiver is his lifeline. Yet for more than a quarter of his life, Maine's inadequate waiver funding forced him to live out of state—separated from his family and community. The state paid more to send him away, choosing inflexible and costly solutions rather than investing in sustainable, community-based care.

I urge you: See my son—and others like him—as human beings, not just budget items. Today, Daniel lives in a small group home in a quiet Lewiston neighborhood. He is nonverbal, communicating minimally through a few signs, an iPad, and head nods. But with the right supports, he thrives. He is gentle, capable, and even gives back—delivering Meals on Wheels to 16 clients each week. My family is deeply grateful for support from Maine, from policies, from providers, and direct care workers that have made this possible.

Without adequate funding, Daniel loses the hard-earned skills that allow him to participate in his community. He struggles with even basic tasks, becomes distressed, and his frustration manifests as aggression. The engaged, contributing Daniel disappears. Those who know him describe him as a joy—but that version of Daniel exists only because of a system of care that works for him.

I will not list all the legal and ethical violations being ignored to push this budget forward. But I will say this: **The proposed budget will devastate my son's life and the lives of countless others.** Inadequate funding leads to staff shortages, home closures, providers leaving the field, and people with disabilities being displaced. Families are left helpless. The consequences are dire—homelessness, increased hospital and emergency room stays, and even jail. The human cost is immeasurable.

I am here today because my son's life matters. **It is unconscionable to let a hefty rainy-day fund sit unused while Mainers like Daniel—who have already been stripped of so much—face losing their homes, their stability, and their dignity.** The state made promises to people with disabilities and their families and legal commitments to the direct care workers and providers that support them. I am asking you to keep them.

Fight for Daniel. Fight for those like him. Demand a legislative process that matters and creates good policy—policy that isn't discarded a few years later due to short-sighted, inflexible decisions. Maine has an excess of funds. **Use them to protect the people who depend on you.**

I urge you to:

- Restore the COLA to MaineCare reimbursement service rates.
- Appropriate sufficient funds to fully restore MaineCare COLAs and pending rate determinations.
- Reject changes to Section UU and the MaineCare Rate Setting System.

Thank you.