

Chair Rafferty and Chair Murphy and the distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

I'm Laurel Huntsberger, from Unity Maine, and I am in full support of LD 46.

I'm a senior at the Ecology Learning Center charter high school and I have Down syndrome. I'm enrolled in mainstream courses in Social Studies, Science, Theater and ELA and get good grades because I work hard, but I need support and accommodations to be academically successful. My chosen peer cohort are the high-achieving students in my school. I want to go to college like they are planning to do.

I don't know what's next for me after graduation. I fall into a gap. I haven't found programs that meet my needs, interests and abilities. I have other classmates with disabilities facing a similar muddle.

This bill offers a solution that supports Maine's young people who are capable and eager for college but need some extra support to be successful in that setting. It is a less expensive and better option than more expensive day programs, and it paves a way for my future employment and independent life success.

I hope you will support LD46.

Thank you,  
Laurel Huntsberger