

March 3rd, 2025

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Re: LD 46 An Act to Establish a Grant Program to Increase Postsecondary Educational Opportunities for Students with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorder

Chair Rafferty, Chair Murphy, and Members of the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee

My name is Sami Woodcock, I live in Saco. I am 17-years-old and a junior at Thornton Academy. I am submitting this testimony in support of L.D. forty-six.

At Thornton Academy I have met my best friend Brookie. One of my favorite things to do is to just talk to Brookie. Not long ago Brookie and I were in the car together going to Dancing with the Stars. I asked Brookie if she had Down Syndrome like me?

Brookie said “no.”

Then I asked Brookie “what do you have?”

Brookie said “I have one less chromosome than you.”

I said “so you were born just Brookie?”

She said “yes.”

Then I asked Brookie if she got paid to work with me.

Brookie said “no of course not Sami I am your friend.”

I said “today is an amazing day” and thanked Brookie for choosing me.

Brookie was crying a little bit but she grabbed my hand and gave it a big squeeze.

I am sharing this story because everybody should have a friend like Brookie.

I may not have met Brookie if I was not part of Best Buddies, Student Council, Unified Basketball, Bocce Ball, Volleyball, Art, and Gym. Brookie helps me to be independent and do my best in English, Robotics, Dance, Acting, and History.

In my senior year I am hoping to do the Culinary Arts Program at the Biddeford Center of Technology. I am hoping to be able to go to college like Brookie so, I can get a job helping people in the hospital.

Thank you for listening to me today and please support LD forty-six so I can go to college and like my friends.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sami Woodcock