



In Support of
LD 834 *An Act to Update the State Supplement to Supplemental Security Income*
LD 840 *An Act to Modernize the State Supplement to Supplemental Security Income by Removing*
Marriage Disincentives

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

March 17, 2025

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Kristin Overton, and I am the Executive Director of SKILLS Inc. I also serve on the board of directors for the Maine Association for Community Service Providers (MACSP), the statewide association representing nearly 100 agencies that provide person-centered educational, vocational, residential, and community supports, as well as specialized services and care to thousands of individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, or brain injuries across Maine.

I am here today on behalf of MACSP in strong support of LD 834 – An Act to Update the State Supplement to Supplemental Security Income and LD 840 – An Act to Modernize the State Supplement to Supplemental Security Income by Removing Marriage Disincentives.

These bills represent critical steps toward ensuring financial stability and dignity for individuals with disabilities in Maine. We commend Representative Tipping and the self-advocates who have worked tirelessly to highlight the inadequacies of SSI funding and the unfair SSI marriage penalty.

Increasing the state's contribution to SSI, as proposed in LD 834, and eliminating the discriminatory reduction in benefits for married individuals, as outlined in LD 840, are long-overdue reforms.

For many individuals receiving SSI, the current state supplement is insufficient to cover even the most basic living expenses. LD 834 addresses this by increasing the minimum state supplemental income

benefit and ensuring future adjustments are tied to the cost of living—helping SSI recipients keep pace with economic realities.

Similarly, LD 840 corrects a long-standing injustice by eliminating the marriage penalty, which unfairly reduces benefits for couples. The current system discourages marriage by assuming that two individuals living together require significantly less financial support than if they lived separately. This bill modernizes Maine's approach to SSI by aligning benefits with actual cost-of-living needs and removing unnecessary financial barriers for married couples.

These changes uphold the principles of fairness, inclusion, and dignity. We urge the committee to support these measures and help create a more equitable system for individuals with disabilities who depend on SSI to meet their basic needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We welcome any questions you may have.