



March 17, 2025
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Testimony in support of LD 834 “An Act to Update the State Supplement to Supplemental Security Income”

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

My name is Monique Stairs and I am the Executive Director of Speaking Up For Us (SUFU). SUFU has been the self-advocacy network in Maine since 1993 and we are an established 501(c)3 non-profit. Self-Advocacy is part of the civil rights movement for people living with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) to advocate and voice their opinions on issues that are important to them. Self-advocates are the people who have the lived experience of what it means to live with a disability. Our Board of Directors is made up 100% of adults living with I/DD, which makes us a unique organization.

I am submitting this testimony in favor of LD 834 “**An Act to Update the State Supplement to Supplemental Security Income.**”

For the past 2 legislative sessions, self-advocates submitted testimony to the Health and Human Services Committee requesting Maine increase the portion the state provides to social security recipients from \$8 to \$65 and eliminate the marriage penalty for those who choose to get married. This combined bill passed this committee both years but failed to be funded. Self-Advocates are very passionate about this issue as they live on extremely limited incomes that keep them at or below the poverty level.

The cost of living continues to rise, yet the state supplement to SSI has remained inadequate, leaving people with disabilities to make impossible choices between paying for food or medicine, rent or electricity. No one should have to live this way, especially not our most vulnerable residents.



Maine has the power and responsibility to do better for its citizens who live with disabilities. By increasing the state supplement to SSI we would provide much-needed relief to thousands of individuals who are barely getting by. This is not just about financial assistance—it is about dignity, stability, and the ability to participate and be included in the community.

I urge the committee to pass LD 834 and demonstrate a commitment toward ensuring people living with disabilities are valued and receive the financial support they need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Monique Stairs
Executive, Director
Speaking Up For Us
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