

March 17, 2025

100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Testimony in support of LD 840 “An Act to Modernize the State Supplement to Supplemental Security Income by Removing Marriage Disincentives”

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

My name is Regina Bowie and I live in Presque Isle, Maine. I am a self-advocate and member of Speaking Up For Us. I am testifying in support of LD 840 because it is important for people who live with disabilities to be able to get married without losing income. If I chose to get married in the future, I will know that I or my spouse will not lose our entire income.

I have a fiancé who has really special needs and because of that we are not living together. We tried to have a ceremony because we want to get married. Because of his needs, we were not able to get married the way we wanted to. It has been a negative impact on the both of us. We have tried to do this in a way that works for the both of us. Because of these reasons, we had a commitment ceremony. If we had married like we wanted to, we would have both lost our benefits. This has taken a toll on us both emotionally and physically and we just don't think it is fair. This situation has negatively impacted our lives because we don't even live together like a normal couple.

I have advocated on this issue of what self-advocates call the marriage penalty and have even spoken with Congress people to try to make changes on a federal level. If we make this change here in Maine, it will show that Maine believes that people with disabilities should be able to get married just like everyone else. This bill will help others ease the burden of the expense of living as well as help them make a choice when they plan to get married.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony. I will be available to answer questions.

Sincerely,

Regina Bowie

Presque Isle, ME

crystalunicorn73@spectrum.net