

March 18, 2025

Senator Henry Ingwersen, Chair  
Representative Michele Meyer, Chair  
Committee on Health and Human Services  
Cross Office Building, Room 209  
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: LD 769: An Act Regarding Access to Behavioral Health Supports for  
Adults with Certain Disabilities

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

My name is Abbott Philson, I am a very experienced self-advocate and DRM Board Member. I wanted to share my experiences with restraint and planned use of restraint as a person with disabilities in Maine. While I have not been restrained myself, I have witnessed my peers being restrained. It was always scary to watch and I can tell the person being restrained was scared and embarrassed. Almost without fail, the situation that resulted in restraint was caused because the teacher or staff person in charge felt the person was not listening or complying with their demands. However, the person was actually trying to find a way to communicate or did not know any other way to communicate. These events were always traumatic as the person was yelling and screaming for the staff to stop hurting them and they kept getting hurt. I have witnessed these events take place when I was in school, at day programs and residential settings. I was exposed to the violence and fear of witnessing violence at all stages of my life.

Removing planned use of restraint is important for two reasons. Most importantly, it would give us, the Mainers with disabilities the freedom from fear of being exposed to violence or fear of being restrained and harmed at school, work and in our homes. Living without fear of the threat of violence or witnessing violence is something that people without disabilities get to enjoy every day. Second, Maine can continue being the leading example of equality in the country by showing other states how to provide humane services.

Sincerely,

Abbott Philson