

Samantha Severance
Bangor, Maine

March 14, 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:

I am here to testify in support of LD 769, An Act Regarding Access to
Behavioral Health Supports for Adults with Certain Disabilities.

My name is Samantha Severance, and I am a person who has an
intellectual disability. I currently live in my own apartment in Bangor,
Maine. In the past, I lived in a group home where I had a behavior
management plan that included restraints.

I have been restrained many times. One time, I was being restrained and a
staff put all their weight on me and I couldn't breathe. I felt like I was going
to die. When I wasn't being restrained, I was in fear that I would be. It felt
like nobody cared about me or my safety. Sometimes, pressure can be
calming for me, such as the use of a weighted blanket. But being
restrained against my will was traumatizing. I think that because agency
staff were trained to use restraints on me, that is what they did when I was
overwhelmed, instead of supporting me in other ways, like encouraging me
to call the crisis line. If staff had used positive supports to help me, it might
not have turned out that way.

Now, I live in my own apartment, and have staff come in during certain times to help me with my medication and keeping up with keeping the apartment clean. I do not have a behavior management plan and no one restrains me. I feel independent and free. When I think about those dark times, I think about how there was a better way, and I'm happy I have a better life now.

I am asking you to support LD 769 because it will not allow agencies to use restraints as a part of someone's behavior plan. Agencies should not traumatize people, they should use positive support for people who need extra help. Nobody should have to live that way. People receiving services should not have to live with being traumatized or live in fear that this can happen again.

I urge you to vote in favor of/opposition to L.D. 769.

Sincerely,

Samantha Severance