

Amanda Hartman

In Support Of LD 1060 An Act to Provide Funding to Reduce Stigma for Parents Seeking Support

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Good Morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Amanda Hartman. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to be heard. I am here in support of LD 1060.

Being a part of the Be There For Me campaign has been an incredibly rewarding experience. You might even recognize me as one of the faces of the campaign, perhaps on a poster or even a bus. I proudly stand by this campaign because I know that having a platform that is easy to navigate, user-friendly, and truly there for people in a supportive way makes sense. It's an honor to stand with the people working on this campaign to make this world more supportive.

I have turned to so many agencies that are supposed to be our support systems, the ones meant to provide information, opportunities, education and understanding. Instead, I've been met with silence, left to navigate this complex web of life alone. It feels like you have to fight a constant, exhausting battle just to access the help that is supposedly available. You have to become your own full-time advocate, not only for yourself but your child and your whole family, relentlessly pushing for a chance to improve your situation, even on days when the sheer exhaustion makes it feel impossible. Doing everything for not only yourself but your child/children and family, as well. All while not falling apart, not being sick or having any new crisis to deal with.

So I ask: where do we turn? Where is the non-judgmental, genuinely helpful support that doesn't speak down to those of us struggling? Where are the resources that truly understand the impossible tightrope we walk every single day as parents? That's everything the Be There For Me Campaign is and continues to be for those who are forced to do the leg work alone, but they've made it easier to navigate and user friendly. They've reminded the world, and most importantly myself, it's ok to not be ok and there are resources to help.

I hope you will support this important resource that supports parents like me to navigate life's challenges. We need to be there for Maine families – and this is one great way to do that. Thank you.