

Melissa Harding, Waldo County Mom Of Four  
In Support of LD 1060 An Act to Provide Funding to Reduce Stigma for Parents Seeking  
Support  
April 4, 2025

Good morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and share my testimony in support of LD 1060 as a mother, as a community member, and as a parent leader that works with parents from all over the state who struggle with access to resources and support while navigating the challenges of everyday parenting.

The Be There For ME Campaign is so much more than a campaign. It is more than a website. It is more than messaging and advertisements. It is a call to action to every community here in Maine to change the way we support and show up for families. It is an answer to the cries for help from families raising children with no village who feel isolated, alone, and left behind. Families who are afraid to ask for help, families who are ashamed they cannot make ends meet, families who are navigating systems they are afraid of, because they feel judged or often punished with child welfare intervention for trying to access the very resources that are in place for these exact circumstances.

Being a parent is the hardest job in the world, and it has only gotten harder since Covid. Isolation and lack of resources have families hanging on by a thread. The Be There For ME Campaign is changing that by answering those cries for help, by validating those struggles with no judgement, by lifting the voices of parents and families and saying being a parent is HARD, and it is ok to say it, it is ok to feel it, and it is ok to ask for help.

This messaging is different because it was created by parents, in their own words, with their own stories, and therefore it is received differently by other parents hearing this message that they are not alone in this. I can't tell you how many parents have personally reached out through this campaign to tell me they needed this so badly, they needed to hear it, they needed to see it, they needed to feel it. They did not feel so alone now.

We can do better as human beings to support families. We can stop turning a blind eye to their struggles, we can stop judging circumstances we do not understand, we can stop acting like there is nothing we can do because of funding. We can listen. We can continue to lift the voices of families through the Be There For ME Campaign. We can say we hear your cries for help, and together we can create our own village, and stronger communities here in Maine. So, today I am asking you to vote in favor of LD 1060 and lift up and hear the voices of families. Today I am asking you to be there for ME.