



Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

April 1, 2025

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: please accept this testimony in support of LD 263 Resolve, to Provide Rural Nonmedical Transportation Services to the Elderly and Adults with Disabilities Receiving Home and Community Benefits Under MaineCare

The Maine Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) works in partnership with people with disabilities, parents, advocates, and policy makers to promote independence, integration, and inclusion of all people with disabilities through advocacy, capacity building, and systems change throughout the state of Maine and on the national level.

Under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, MDDC is required to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities of all ages and their families participate in the design of, and have access to, needed community services, individualized support, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion in all facets of family and community life. **MDDC is committed to creating a Maine in which all people are valued and respected because we believe communities are stronger when everyone is included.**

The challenges of transportation for Mainers who do not drive, especially those who live in rural areas, have been well documented. Many people with disabilities do not have the option to drive cars and lack access to other modes of transportation. This includes many, perhaps most, recipients of Home and Community Based Services. Transportation is available to access to medical services and through very limited public transit services (often offered as private/ public partnerships and very difficult to sustain financially). Accessible transportation is often in very short supply. The lack of transportation options in many communities is a major barrier to employment and limits access to the types of civic, social and recreational opportunities that are necessary for full community engagement. Increasing access to transportation increases access to the types of activities and relationships that provide meaning to our lives in a way that anyone with a car generally takes for granted. This pilot has the benefit of offering much needed flexibility to participants. Ideally, this pilot would also be available to other recipients of Home and Community Based Services (recipients of Maine Care Sections 18, 20, 21, and 29). Please consider expanding the eligibility to include those other recipients of Home and Community Based Services.

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Maine Developmental Disabilities Council