

Testimony in favor of LD 943

Breana Bray

3 April 2025

Good Afternoon Committee members,

My name is Breana Bray and I live in Oakland. I am a student at the University of Maine in Orono and a mom. I am here today to urge you to pass LD 943. My experience with Fedcap has been deeply frustrating and discouraging, and has severely hindered my efforts to pursue my educational goals. As a single parent in Maine, I rely on programs that were created to support people in my shoes. I thought Fedcap would help me navigate the complexities of higher education while balancing the demands of parenthood, so that I could get my family to a better place. Unfortunately, my experience with Fedcap has been the opposite of supportive; it has felt like they were putting up barriers every step of the way.

I initially became introduced to Fedcap in 2019, I reached out to them for assistance with the necessary supports to help me succeed in college. As someone committed to improving my life and securing a better future for my child, I knew that education was my path forward. However, I quickly encountered numerous obstacles. My emails went unanswered, my phone calls went unreturned, and every attempt I made to connect with someone who could help felt like it was met with apathy. At that point I was unable to wait any longer and had to accept a low paying job with no opportunity for advancement or career growth, and I spent the next 3 years stuck in that position, still struggling to get by, with no hope for things to improve.

In 2022 I was re-introduced to Fedcap and this time I was told by Fedcap employees to not pursue my education and to get back into the workforce, however that may look. I felt at a loss, I knew I wanted to pursue my education, to obtain my degree and to open opportunities in a career I am truly passionate about that would also provide consistent financial stability for me and my daughter. A career that would not only inspire me, but would be an inspiration to my child, and for the betterment of our family.

It is beyond disappointing to feel like I am trying to build a better future for my family, only to be met with roadblocks from the very organization that is supposed to be helping people like me. I am still struggling to get the support I need to succeed in college and to better my life and my child's life. Fedcap's lack of responsiveness and failure to provide the necessary assistance is not only discouraging but also deeply disheartening.

I hope that sharing my story can shed light on the serious gaps in service and support that need to be addressed so that other individuals, especially single parents and those facing other significant challenges, do not have to endure the same frustration I've experienced. It is my hope that no one else is made to feel as though they are being obstructed from pursuing their dreams due to inefficiency and neglect. By passing LD 943 you are ensuring that the TANF program is being administered the way it should be, so that moms like me can succeed. Thank you!