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Testimony of Rep. Jennifer Poirier on

LD 1509, "Resolve, to Maintain Access to Home and Community-based Services for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder or Brain Injury"

Before the Joint Standing Health and Human Services

April 23, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

I am Jennifer Poirier, and I represent House District 70, which is the wonderful community of Skowhegan.

I am pleased to co-sponsor LD 1509 "Resolve, to Maintain Access to Home and Community-based Services for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder or Brain Injury".

For those of you who are not familiar with my professional life outside of the legislature, I have a very fulfilling career as a Community Living Coordinator for adults with Intellectual disabilities (ID) and autism (AD). In my role, I coordinate services for Shared Living, Home Supports, Community Supports, Community Membership, and Work Supports. I have firsthand knowledge of the impacts that rates and funding have in this field.

I have seen rates have a direct impact on our ability to recruit and hire Direct Support Professionals. I am aware that the results of the rate study that part of this legislation requested have recently been released.

While we review this data, it is important to understand the critical role a DSP has in the services of adults with ID, Autism, and Brain Injury. Why it is crucial that we properly fund services?

To understand, you really need to know the role of a DSP beyond a written job description. They have a unique skill set. DSPs may have varying degrees of educational background, but they have a caring, compassionate, and understanding personality like I have never seen in any other profession. It is difficult for anyone to understand the true value of their work without seeing what they do daily. I will not expand on this right now, because I could go on for hours about how wonderful each of the DSPs I am fortunate to work with are. I will offer to speak with any of you at any time to explain their work and the positive impact they have on so many individuals.

LD 1509 is a much-needed step to ensure that our state is accountable and that we are doing everything possible to ensure that services for individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Autism, and Brain Injury will continue with necessary staffing. It is crucial that we act to implement these rate changes and assist individuals supported to live their best lives. Please support Representative Stover's amendment and pass LD 1509.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Jennifer Poirier
State Representative