



April 23, 2025

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: LD 1606 An Act to Require Data Collection and Major Substantive Rulemaking for the Lifespan Waiver Providing Home and Community-based Services for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder or Other Related Conditions

Chair Ingwersen, Chair Meyer, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

My name is Carrie Woodcock and I am the Executive Director for Maine Parent Federation (MPF) and the parent of two children with different abilities. MPF is Maine's federally funded Parent Training and Information Center and Family-to-Family Health Information Center. We provide training and individual assistance to families of children with different abilities (especially to underserved populations) to increase access to all systems of care and increase positive outcomes.

I am testifying today in support of LD 1606 An Act to Require Data Collection and Major Substantive Rulemaking for the Lifespan Waiver Providing Home and Community-based Services for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder or Other Related Conditions.

When my daughter Sami was born with a diagnosis of Down Syndrome I remember one of my first thoughts being "I am going to be a parent for the rest of my life." Kind of a silly thought as we are all parents for the rest of our lives. However, what little I knew about the diagnosis led me to believe I would have a child who would be dependent upon me and not have the ability to be independent.

I share that story because the Lifespan Waiver for individuals like Sami will provide the best opportunity yet for our state to provide a well rounded system of support which will open doors to education, employment, and independent living. The Department has done thoughtful research and engagement with families, self-advocates, and providers in the creation of this waiver. While, there will no doubt be adjustments made as the

waiver starts the piloting I do believe the Department will continue to accommodate and modify as they learn.

Sami turned 18 on April 12th, together we are navigating eligibility for adult waiver assistance, she is her own guardian, she is finishing up her junior year in High School, she hopes to be able to pursue college, and one day would like to work in a hospital to provide assistance to those who have gone through surgery. There is no doubt as her Mom and with the assistance of the Lifespan waiver Sami will accomplish these goals.

I urge the Committee to please support LD 1606 so adults with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities in Maine can have the support for opportunities to achieve their hopes and dreams.

Respectfully,
Carrie Woodcock