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Testimony of Representative Amy Roeder in support of
LD 1835, An Act to Improve Nonemergency MaineCare Transportation
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Good morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Representative Amy Roeder. I represent House District 23 in Bangor and serve as a cosponsor of LD 1835. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important legislation.

In Bangor, I've seen how something as basic as a ride can determine whether someone stays on track with care or falls behind. Nonemergency MaineCare Transportation (NET) helps people reach mental health counseling, primary care, substance use treatment and follow-up visits after hospitalization. It supports stability, safety and healing. When a ride falls through, for whatever reason, it can disrupt treatment plans, interrupt progress and make it harder for people to stay engaged in their care.

I recall one individual who had been making steady progress and missed a critical appointment because of complications with the NET ride. That one missed visit caused a setback that took weeks to recover from. Even when these disruptions are relatively rare, the consequences for the person affected are serious. In that moment, having someone to call, someone who could listen, step in and help resolve the issue, would have made a meaningful difference. LD 1835 addresses this by establishing an independent ombudsman: a dedicated resource to support MaineCare members when problems occur and to help ensure they're resolved quickly and respectfully.

MaineCare transportation is one of our state's most widely used services, yet people have minimal ways to raise concerns or understand how the system is performing. That leaves voices unheard and problems unresolved. This matters especially for individuals seeking behavioral health care, where missed appointments increase emotional stress and make it harder to stay engaged in treatment. When the system feels unpredictable, staying connected to care becomes even harder.

LD 1835 strengthens this essential program. It elevates feedback, improves communication and increases visibility into how the system is working. This helps riders, providers and policymakers work together toward better results. For many of the people I serve, knowing that their voice matters and that their care is a shared priority helps build trust and stability.

This legislation moves us toward a system that is compassionate, responsive and effective. I support LD 1835 because it improves accountability and access for the people who need it most.

Thank you for your time and your continued commitment to the health and well-being of Maine people.