

Good Afternoon Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Sam Field and I am here testifying in opposition to LD 1737. This year I am very excited to have received one of the Dream Adventures Moose hunts. I have been suffering from Leukemia for a few years now. My prognosis is now positive, but it was uncertain for a time. I was very excited when Jared reached out to my mom offering to teach me how to hunt and maybe even get a moose permit through his program, it's something that I have wanted to learn to do ever since my family moved here. My journey to remission was filled with hospital rooms, doctor's offices, painful medication and an uncertain future. The amount of stress on me and my family is something that I hope no one else will go through, but it happens all too often.

For me, participating in the Moose Maine Kids Dream Adventures program does not only mean I can go on a moose hunt. This spring they helped me harvest my first wild game, two turkeys. The joy and fulfilment was something that I have not felt in a long time. Additionally, they are committed to getting me a so-called "grand slam" which is harvesting one of each of the big game animals in Maine; turkey, bear, moose and deer. More importantly through this process, they are teaching me skills that I hope to use for what hopefully is a long healthy life. It is also great to be part of a community, these types of illnesses can be extremely isolating so making new friends and gaining new mentors has been a great benefit for me. The people involved with Moose Maine Kids spend a lot of time with me, from range days to learn to use a gun to waking up at 3:30am on opening day. I know they are committed to my success in the woods. Additionally, they are very sensitive to my medical needs. Because of the chemo treatments I am on one of my knees went necrotic, the bone died. If it does not regenerate, I will need a knee replacement when I am 21 years old. Jared, Ron, Rob and Hunter are very good about making sure I am not putting too much pressure on it, they lug all the equipment that I use to hunt around in the woods for me including a blind, chairs, guns and a tripod for the gun. They really are skilled at meeting kids like me where they are at and showing them success.

The night before opening day I overheard Jared and Ron talking about this bill, about how it was going to severely limit the resources they had for these types of hunts. I asked Jared what I could do to help, so I am here before you today. I want to tell you first hand that the money they fundraise using the lodge tag program goes to good use. This organization spares no expense making sure that the hunters are safe, comfortable and have success. I hope you all will oppose this bill, and leave this important fundraising tool in place for an organization that has gone the extra mile for me at every chance. They are a great crew and they are doing great things. Someday I hope to be in their position, helping kids like me get through the toughest time in their life.

Sam Field, Belfast