

Dube, Sophie

From: Colleen Brown <207puffinpines@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 30, 2025 4:14 PM
To: Meyer, Michele
Cc: Dube, Sophie; Moore, Marianne
Subject: Testimony on LD 2021 – Support with Safeguards Needed

This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

Dear Representative Meyer and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on LD 2021, *An Act to Add an Online Option for Reporting of Suspected Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of Adults*.

I understand that this bill is necessary to bring Maine into compliance with federal regulations requiring at least two reporting methods, including an online option. For that reason, I agree that this legislation must move forward.

However, my concern is that the bill, as written, adds a new intake mechanism without adding a gatekeeper, clear operational standards, or accountability measures. DHHS is effectively being asked to build and operate a critical system at the same time, without legislative guardrails.

Allowing online reporting will almost certainly increase report volume. That is not inherently bad, but without clear triage rules, response timelines, or confirmation protocols, it creates real risk. An online submission can easily give reporters a false sense of security that a report has been received, reviewed, and acted upon, when in reality it may be sitting in a queue in an already overburdened system.

The bill does not currently address:

- How quickly online reports must be reviewed by a human
- How urgent cases will be identified and prioritized
- Whether reporters will receive confirmation and guidance
- How DHHS will manage increased volume without additional capacity
- How the Legislature or public will know whether the system is working

This is not a technology issue; it is a systems issue. Intake without triage is not protection. Reporting without response is not safety.

I respectfully urge the Committee to advance LD 2021 with safeguards that ensure this modernization does not unintentionally increase risk to vulnerable adults. Reasonable additions could include:

- Clear language that online reporting does not replace emergency reporting requirements
- Required confirmation to reporters, including next steps and when to call immediately
- Defined timelines for human review and triage of online submissions

- Internal prioritization standards for high-risk reports
- Aggregate public reporting on volume, response times, and outcomes

These additions would not slow implementation. They would strengthen it.

Modernizing reporting mechanisms is appropriate and necessary. But modernization without oversight, capacity planning, and accountability places both reporters and vulnerable adults at risk.

For these reasons, I support LD 2021 **with amendments** that ensure the system has a gatekeeper, not just a front door.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

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