



## Testimony In Support

### ***LD 2117 Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Amend Its Rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II, Section 21, Home and Community Benefits for Members with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorder***

January 28, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 2117.

My name is Amanda Karomba. I am the CEO of Happy Haven, a board member, and chair the Residential Services Committee of the Maine Association for Community Service Providers (MACSP).

MACSP represents nearly 100 agencies providing person-centered educational, vocational, residential, and community supports, as well as specialized services and care, to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and brain injuries—helping them live full and meaningful lives in the community. LD 2117 is focused on just one of the Home and Community-Based Services delivered in the IDD system.

I would like to thank Representative Sachs for her work to consider the importance of home and connection for individuals with disabilities, as well as the impact of eviction on people with disabilities and their families, and for working to bring forward the bill.

The Department designed the placement system for individuals in two-person homes, approves providers, and operates the vendor call system that case managers and providers use to identify suitable housemates. Since returning to enforcing the two-person vacancy rule last year, as directed by a March 2025 Department Memo, providers have adjusted their operations, actively utilized the vendor call system, and collaborated closely with case managers, individuals, and families to identify appropriate placements.

Providers and case managers recognize the intent behind returning to the two-person rule last year and have worked diligently to comply as the Department has reinforced its implementation. When meeting these Department expectations, providers absorb and mitigate very real and significant consequences on behalf of the person supported. When a service authorization ends—because the vacancy protocol has been exhausted and no safe discharge is available—providers may, despite good-faith efforts, be compelled to continue supporting the remaining member to protect their health and safety. While this situation is the exception, it creates substantial risk for the Department, the provider, and, most critically, the individual receiving services.

**LD 2117 addresses a small but important subset of cases where, despite good-faith and documented efforts, additional time is needed to honor individual choice and identify a suitable housemate without destabilizing the individual receiving services.**

Specifically, the bill proposes:

- An additional 30 days before an eviction notice must be issued to a MaineCare member or their guardian; and
- The ability to apply for up to two additional 60-day extensions, which are not automatic, must be requested and require documentation of ongoing placement efforts in certain circumstances.

This bill does not guarantee extensions. It establishes clear expectations that case managers bear the responsibility to demonstrate active, good-faith efforts to secure a suitable housemate and to show progress toward compliance. Extensions are discretionary and time-limited, reinforcing accountability within the system.

Selecting a new home and roommate requires careful consideration of compatibility, health and safety needs, and individual choice. Rushed placements and evictions can lead to failed matches, repeated moves away from an individual's chosen home and/or community, worse, crises—outcomes that are disruptive for individuals and families and costly for the system.

Without the flexibility proposed in LD 2117, individuals and families may receive eviction notices even when placement efforts are underway, creating unnecessary fear and instability. This bill allows time for the system to work as intended while preserving the two-person rule as the standard.

For these reasons, MACSP supports LD 2117. It reflects a balanced, thoughtful approach that respects Department oversight, recognizes the responsibilities of providers and case management, and centers on the dignity, stability, and choice of the people we collectively serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions today or during the work session.