

LD 2212 — An Act Making Unified Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government...
Section Z363 and PART G.-1

Good Morning Senators Rotundo and Ingwersen, Representatives Gattine and Meyer, and distinguished members of the HHS and AFA committees.

My name is Kim Humphrey. I live in Auburn. I am a mother and guardian of a son with profound autism served on a section 21 waiver, and am on the Maine Developmental Services Oversight and Advisory Board (MDSOAB). I am appointed by the Governor to a seat representing Androscoggin County. I am testifying for the MDSOAB.

The reality is that this committee and I/DD services, in general, have historically been under prioritized and under-funded since closure of the Community Consent Decree in 2010.

My role on the committee is to bring my own personal, and systems-level perspective to monthly discussions. I have also represented MDSOAB on statewide efforts, including the Chapter 5 Behavioral Regulations Committee, which has provided monthly feedback on a major statewide rule change currently being drafted, as well as on the dental subcommittee of MDSOAB.

My perspective is also shaped by decades of involvement across Maine's disability and health systems. When my son was born with profound autism, it became clear that the best use of my life's work was to advocate for him rather than pursue a traditional paying career path.

Over time, I have seen that his successes and failures are deeply connected to the successes and failures of the system itself. I have also learned that policymakers, like you, make the strongest decisions when sound policy is matched with the funding necessary for implementation. One of the best examples of this is that much cost, and anguish, could have been prevented if unmet needs had consistently been prioritized by category, as required in statute created in 2007. When decisions are guided by data and collective lived experience, funds are far more likely to be used effectively.

The MDSOAB is the only independent statewide structure specifically tasked with providing this level of oversight and accountability for the I/DD population. Supporting the funding needed to hire staff to adequately support this committee is one of the most cost-efficient choices you can make to strengthen Maine's system and ensure high-quality programming is delivered effectively.

Policy exists for a reason, and providing the resources needed to carry it out will improve lives while supporting a healthier long-term budget through better decision-making.

I urge you to vote to retain this funding so the Oversight Board can operate with the efficiency and quality that Maine's disability community, and this Legislature, deserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kim Humphrey, Auburn, Maine Mother/Guardian of a son with profound autism

Founder and President of Community Connect Maine

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