



LD 2212 Supplemental Budget- I/DD Services Testimony

Senators Rotundo and Ingwersen, Representatives Gattine and Meyer, and members of the AFA and HHS Committees,

My name is Kim Humphrey and I'm from Auburn. I am the Founder and President of Community Connect Maine and the mother of an adult with profound autism supported through the Section 21 waiver and am neither for nor against LD2212.

The new rate structure for Sections 21 and 29 has been completely overhauled to align with the new Lifespan waiver framework. However, through multiple discussions with DHHS, families with members currently on Sections 21 and 29 understood these waiver services would be grandfathered. The central question individuals and families are asking is: will this new combined system be adequately funded? By excluding the COLA in the supplemental budget, the answer right now is no. What individuals and families want and need is stability.

Trust is built through consistency. Funding decisions play a key role in establishing that trust.

DHHS has spent years developing and refining the Lifespan waiver and its relationship to the current waivers. To not include a COLA after all of this effort, risks DHHS shooting itself in the foot.

While there are still significant unanswered questions about how the new rate structure will ultimately function, including how the Supports Intensity Scale, or SIS, is tied to it, at minimum, providing the COLA now is a protective step that helps stabilize the system while those details become clear.

To not support the COLA, which is essential to workforce stability, risks setting this new combined framework up for failure, with no plan B.

Families witness a stark difference in quality of life when individuals are supported by a stable workforce compared to periods marked by turnover and disruption.

Experienced direct care workers are invaluable, and many say they want to stay but cannot afford to without higher wages. The COLA is essential.

Including the COLA is about honoring stability, preventing costly crises, and protecting the public investment already made in the hopes of developing a supportive person center system of care that includes the current I/DD waivers and the new Lifespan framework.

I urge you to include the COLA in the supplemental budget.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kim Humphrey, MPH, Founder and President of CCME and Mother of section 21 member

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