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Hampden

Testimony in support of LD 552, an Act To Strengthen the Individualized education Program Process

To the Chairpeople and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Maggie Hoffman. I am the parent of a 33 year old man who has multiple disabilities, including autism, cerebral palsy, and mental illness. He began receiving special education as soon as he was discharged from the neonatal intensive care unit at 4 ½ months of age.

Prior to living in Maine (we are proud Mainers now), we lived in a state that did not allow unilateral changes to my son Jake's IEP, thank goodness. That meant that his educational and therapeutic goals were individualized, as developed by the IEP team, which included my husband and me. Changes could not be made to his Plan without our agreement.

Maine's students receiving special education and their parents deserve the very same protections. LD 552 ensures Parental Consent or consensus before changing the educational services a student receives.

Additionally, LD 552 includes a provision to include the presence and input of the people who work with students receiving special education services; their perspective is essential for a true picture of an individual student's school daily experiences.