

Morgan Harper
Auburn
LD 1632

To those that this concerns,

My name is Morgan Harper and I live in Auburn Maine, and work in Portland Maine. I am in huge support of LD 1632. I am a parent of a hard of hearing child that currently receives services from The Maine Educational Center for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing. My son is a year and half years old and was born with hearing loss in his left ear. Navigating through doctors visits, and strategic family planning has been made so much easier by working with MECDHH. The care and support we receive honestly feels like we have a family member who just knows everything about my son's hearing loss. Hugo didn't show signs of his hearing loss until recently, so if we weren't connected to MECDHH we would be knocked to the ground with the weight of suddenly managing this. Having them as a partner through this has helped our family and Hugo's childcare center to give him exactly what he needs. I have not once turned to Google to answer any questions about Hugo's hearing loss, I can not express how grateful I am for saving me from the anxiety of consulting the internet. Us as parents, together with Hugo's teachers, and with MECDHH, Hugo is so fully supported and has no idea how much is being done for him. The ripple effect of this impact will be felt throughout Hugo's life and ours.

It is time to revise the rules that govern MECDHH/GBSD and ensure that all children and all families no matter where they live in Maine, receive the support they need.

Receiving the kind of support that we have should not be restricted to where you live or what language you speak, arguably it elevates the need to remove those restrictions. A family in need of support should face no limitations to receiving it, especially when there is something that can be done to alleviate it. We need to be the example of slowing kids and families to flourish with support of their abilities.

1. Statewide services for all deaf or hard of hearing children regardless of where they live or how they communicate
2. Possibility of more Site Based Programs near your home
3. Having MECDHH providers on your child's IFSP or IEP Team
4. This bill adds in specialty providers such as Teachers of the Deaf and SLPs - listening and spoken language, cued speech, ASL Specialists
5. Ensures a team decision on school placement
6. Offers housing for HS students that live too far from a site based program
7. Continues to provide preschool programming, social emotional programming and family activities on Mackworth Island, the home of the deaf community in Maine

It is my hope that you will support this bill and continue to support Maine's Deaf and hard of hearing children. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of support in any way.

Sincerely,
Morgan Harper