

Brian Pelletier  
Yarmouth  
LD 1632

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Brian Pelletier. I live in Yarmouth. I am writing in support of LD 1632. My son, Ansel, who is 3 years old currently attends preschool at The Maine Educational Center for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing on Mackworth Island. Ansel is bilingual in ASL and English and receives both instruction and support services in both languages from his school.

It is time to revise the rules that govern MECDHH/GBSD and ensure that all deaf and hard of hearing children and their families have access to services that are vital to early language development, social emotional development, and success in their education and chosen career path.

My family recently moved back to Maine and fortunately we were able to choose a town to live in that is an easy commute to MECDHH/GBSD and their teachers and language specialists. For too many Maine families, driving to Falmouth every weekday isn't an option and that limits their access to vital support. Having educational experts more available to meet with parents and children where they are both physically and in terms of language modality (cued speech, ASL, or spoken language) will be a great opportunity for families to get proper language support. MECDHH Teachers of the Deaf, SLP's, and ASL Specialists provide vital expertise as part of IEP and IFSP teams and are uniquely qualified to help families and local school districts figure out placement for deaf and hard of hearing children. Thanks in part to the support of MECDHH/GBSD, my son's language development is growing at a rate that we hope he will be ready to attend Yarmouth Public Schools for Kindergarten. Our hope is that every Maine family can have that same access to support to help them learn and grow.

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,  
Brian J. Pelletier