



**Testimony of Lee- Andra D’Attilio, MaineHealth
In Support of LD 1769: An Act Concerning Students Who Experience
Educational Disruption due to Temporary or Permanent Changes
Where They Live
Tuesday, May 9, 2023**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Lee-Andra D’Attilio, Senior Director of Intensive Services at Maine Behavioral Healthcare, and I am here to testify in support of LD 1769, “An Act Concerning Students Who Experience Educational Disruption due to Temporary or Permanent Changes Where They Live” on behalf of MaineHealth.

MaineHealth is an integrated non-profit health care system that provides a continuum of health care services to communities throughout Maine and New Hampshire. As part of our vision of “Working Together so Our Communities are the Healthiest in America,” MaineHealth provides a range of behavioral health services throughout our footprint. These range from community based outpatient therapy, medication management, substance use treatment and care management to inpatient treatment in four community hospitals and Spring Harbor Hospital.

As a social worker who has more than 20 years’ experience working with children and adolescents in Maine, the opportunity to collaborate across departmental boundaries to ensure Maine’s children are not left behind is at the core of the profession I chose. The ability to communicate directly with a statewide network of volunteers all looking to end disruption to education has far-reaching benefits for the people of Maine. Many students experience educational disruption due to temporary living arrangements with extended family, incarceration, detainment in committed or secure settings, hospitalization, economically unstable housing and frequently moving. This program enables community resources to coordinate with schools and state partners in an effective manner and ensures that key staff who interact with students and families are involved.

This program has documented success; unfortunately, it was eliminated during the last administration. As a former liaison of the program, connecting to key external supports without spending hours to figure out who the correct contact resulted in more students having access to the services needed and learning opportunities to be successful. Liaisons are key to facilitating an effective, seamless transition providing better outcomes for students.

For these reasons, I strongly encourage you to support this bill. I am happy to further discuss my position or answer any questions.