



March 23, 2021

Senator Ned Claxton, Chair
Representative Michele Meyer, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Cross Office Building, Room 209
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: Testimony in support of LD 716, An Act To Enhance and Improve the Maine Developmental Services Oversight and Advisory Board and to Establish the Aging and Disability Mortality Review Panel

Dear Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Staci Converse and I am an attorney at Disability Rights Maine. Thank you for the opportunity for Disability Rights Maine (DRM) to provide testimony in support of LD 716. This legislation establishes a panel to review the deaths and serious injuries of individuals with disabilities who receive services through MaineCare home and community-based waiver programs.

DRM supports the purpose of this panel to review deaths and serious injuries and based on this review to make policy recommendations to prevent deaths and serious injuries in the future. The inclusion of a panel coordinator in the legislation is critical to ensure this group gets the support it needs.

Moreover, the composition of the panel is well-balanced and includes representatives from law enforcement; those with medical backgrounds; and those representing advocacy organizations, the Department of Health and Human Services, and service providers. DRM is one of the advocacy organizations identified in the legislation and looks forward to carrying out the important mission of this panel. One crucial group that does not have representation on the panel is individuals receiving services. DRM encourages the Committee to consider amending this legislation to include individuals receiving services on the panel.

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For the foregoing reasons, DRM supports this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/ Staci Converse

Staci Converse
Managing Attorney