



# Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

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5 April 2021

Testimony supporting 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.

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

My name is Rachel Dyer, and I am the associate director of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council. Councils on Developmental Disabilities were created through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) in 1970. Maine's DD Council has been advocating for individuals with Developmental Disabilities (DD) for over 40 years. The DD Council is a federally funded, independent organization with members from across the state, including persons with disabilities, family members, and representatives of public and private agencies which provide services and/or funding for services for individuals with developmental disabilities. As required in federal law, we are involved in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities, with the goal that individuals with developmental and other disabilities of all ages are fully included, integrated and involved in their communities and the decisions impacting their lives.

MDDC strongly supports the institution of this panel charged with the review of deaths and serious injuries and the making of policy recommendations to prevent future deaths and serious injuries. The inclusion of a panel coordinator in the legislation is critical to ensure this group gets the support it needs to operate as intended.

We appreciate the broad-based composition of the panel is well-balanced including law enforcement; those with medical backgrounds; advocates, the Department of Health and Human Services, and service providers. looks forward to carrying out the important mission of this panel. MDDC also supports the inclusion of representation of individuals receiving services on the panel and encourages the Committee to consider amending this legislation to include individuals receiving services on the panel.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.