



# Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

April 7, 2021

## Testimony Supporting LD 1173 “Resolve, To Develop a Plan To Treat in Maine Those Children with Behavioral Health Needs Currently Treated Outside the State”

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and the distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Nancy Cronin and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council)<sup>1</sup>.

We have been sending children out of state because we haven't been able to care for them here for way too many years. Often these children get stuck away, in costly placements, far away from their home and from the people who love them. In June of 2019 the 129<sup>th</sup> Legislature passed a resolve that required case managers to develop a plan to bring children home from out of state residential placements and, if possible, carry out that plan. That law made a lot of sense.

This bill is simple, it provides this body the tools to hold DHHS accountable and it provides you with information that you need to identify what systemic impediments exist that prevents us from caring for Maine's children in State. Unfortunately, this bill is necessary as this is a long-standing problem that clearly needs intervention.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>1</sup>, our purpose is to promote systems change to ensure that all individuals with developmental disabilities are able to live and fully participate in their communities of choice. Working in partnership with people with disabilities, parents, advocates, and policy makers, Maine's DD Council works to promote the independence, integration, and inclusion of all people with disabilities through advocacy, capacity building, and systems change activities throughout the state of Maine and on the national level. The DD Council's mission is **to create a Maine in which all people are valued and respected because we believe communities are stronger when everyone is included**. The Maine DD Council employs four full-time staff who are responsible for all of the internal projects, external grants, and business of the Council.