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Testimony of Todd A. Landry, Ed.D., Director  
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Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

LD 1091 – An Act To Improve the Long-term Outcomes for Youth Transitioning from State Care by Raising the Upper Age Limit for Voluntary Support Eligibility

Hearing Date: April 8, 2021

Good Morning Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am Todd Landry, Director of the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) within the Department of Health and Human Services and I am here to provide you with information on LD 1091, An Act To Improve the Long-term Outcomes for Youth Transitioning from State Care by Raising the Upper Age Limit for Voluntary Support Eligibility. This bill would raise the upper age limit from 20 to 2 years of age for voluntary extended care for youth who turned 18 while in the Department's custody. The bill also makes a corresponding change to the program eligibility requirements for the Alumni Transition Grant Program (ATGP).

OCFS is currently in the process of implementing a recent (and temporary) change to federal law regarding youth aging out of care and would recommend no action be taken on this bill until OCFS can implement this change and gather data on the impact. As part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, the Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act was passed. This bill temporarily requires IV-E agencies to prevent youth from "aging out" of foster care solely due to age from 12/27/2020 to 9/30/2021. OCFS is the IV-E agency for Maine and must permit any youth who left care due to reaching the state's maximum age for voluntary support during the public health emergency (1/27/2020 to 4/20/2021 – subject to extension) to voluntarily re-enter care. This federal legislation also provides funding to support this work. OCFS is implementing this change and believes it would make sense to defer any action on this bill to provide time to understand the impact of such a change (both fiscally and for youth who otherwise would have aged out of care or who voluntarily re-entered care).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.