

**Testimony of Betsy Mahoney, Esq., Community Outreach Liaison, Autism Society of Maine, in Support of LD 962, An Act To Appropriate Funds To Eliminate Waiting Lists for Home and Community-based Services for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities, Autism, Brain Injury and Other Related Conditions**



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Senator Claxton, Rep. Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Betsy Mahoney and I am the community outreach liaison for the Autism Society of Maine. I am also the parent of an adult son with autism and intellectual disabilities who receives supported housing and other services under MaineCare Sec. 21.

The Autism Society supports LD 962. In order for people with disabilities to live meaningful lives and be included in their community, they must receive supports and programs under the MaineCare waiver programs that are the subject of this bill. Unfortunately, thousands of Mainers are not receiving services; instead, they are on waiting lists for these programs.

As of July 2020, there were 2105 people on the Sections 18, 20, 21, and 29 waitlists – with 1790 of those people waiting for Section 21, some of whom have been waiting years for services. As indicated in [the table below, from the OADS website](#), many of those on the waiting lists receive no services at all. The table is from last July, but this is the most recent information I could find on the website.

Developmental Disabilities and Brain Injury Program Participants and Wait Lists, as of July 1, 2020

Waiver Program	Participants	Waitlist	With Other Coverage (see Table 2)	Without Other Coverage (Percent of Current Participants)
Brain Injury (Section 18)	204	80	30	50 (25%)
Other related Conditions (Section 20)	39	22	8	14 (36%)
Comprehensive Services for IDD/ASD (Section 21)	3,226	1,790	1,242	548 (17%)
Support Services for IDD/ASD (Section 29)	2,224	391	157	234 (11%)
<b>Total Unduplicated Members</b>	<b>5,693</b>	<b>2,105</b>	<b>1,437</b>	<b>668 (12%)</b>

LD 962 would provide funding to provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities or autism spectrum disorder on the waiting list for community-based services provided under the MaineCare, Section 21, Section 29 and Section 18.

This Committee has in the past shown support for funding these waiting lists. Last session, this Committee passed an amendment to LD 1984, An Act To Eliminate Waiting Lists for Home and Community-based Services for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities (a similar bill to LD 962) that would have provided funding to:

- Increase annual Section 29 cap by \$70,000 (from what was its previous value of 58,158.60) The FY 2021-21 general fund cost was estimated at \$2.5M.
- Appropriate \$3M from general fund in FY 2021-21 to fund people in Priority 2 portion of the 21 wait list who aren't receiving any other MaineCare home and community based or support services
- Eliminate 29 wait list through 6/30/2021 (FY 2020-21 general fund cost estimated at \$1.9M)

We urge the current members of the committee to show the same support by voting ought to pass on LD 962. We look forward to working with members of this committee and the Legislature as well as the Department of Health and Human Services to promote the well-being of people with autism and their families.