

Testimony of Betsy Mahoney, Esq., Community Outreach Liaison, Autism Society of Maine, in Support of LD 1490, An Act To Improve Home and Community-based Services for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities, Autism, Brain Injury and Other Related Conditions



72B Main Street
Winthrop, ME 04364
www.asmonline.org
1-800-273-5200 or 377-9603
Fax 207-377-9434

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 is very much in favor of LD 1490. In order for people with disabilities to be included in their community, the State must provide services and programs, and provide adequate reimbursement payments to ensure a workforce to work with this population.

Community-based services and supports through adulthood are important to the whole family. We support important provisions of the bill that call for greater transparency on the part of DHS about the status of the wait lists, including:

- The requirement that the department post monthly data on how many persons were on a waiting list for services and how many persons were in each prioritization category.
- The requirement that the department post quarterly data on median time from application for waiver services to approval by the department for receipt of the same waiver services
- The requirement that the commissioner's plan project whether there will be any waiting lists for home and community-based services waivers over the next 4 years
- The requirement that the commissioner's plan project the budgetary impact of eliminating any waiting lists for home and community-based services if such waiting lists are projected to exist

Enacting LD 1490 would at least partially remedy the wait list situation, so long as agencies have adequate staffing capacity, the crux of which is having the ability to pay direct support staff suitable wages.

We look forward to working with members of this committee, members of the Legislature and the Department of Health and Human Services to promote the well-being of people with autism, intellectual disabilities, brain injury and other conditions and their families.

