



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**May 10, 2021**

**Testimony of Rep. Denise Tepler in support of  
LD 1649, An Act To Make the Shared Living Program Accessible for Persons with  
Intellectual Disability or Autism  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services**

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and esteemed colleagues of the Health and Human Services Committee, I am Denise Tepler, representing House District 54, all of the Town of Topsham. I am pleased today to offer support for **LD 1649, An Act To Make the Shared Living Program Accessible for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism**.

I brought a similar bill on behalf of Josh and his fiancé, Amy in the previous legislature. At that time, the Department indicated that they were working with the couple to solve the issues facing them regarding housing and this bill was un-necessary. Yet here we are again.

In order to make “shared living” a reality, and not simply a phrase in the Mainecare manual, it must be possible for the person offering this type of living situation to be able to afford to make the renovations necessary to their home to meet the needs of the Mainecare clients. This may mean a wheelchair ramp, a zero-threshold shower, a grab bar, or simple doorway widening.

Maine has a housing crisis, not only for persons under these limited waivers, but for all affordable housing. Allowing the use of these funds for accessibility renovations is an inexpensive way to expand housing options and make offering shared living accommodations a reality.

I strongly support LD 1649.

Thank you for your consideration.