

Senator Breen, Representative Pierce and the honorable members of the Standing Joint Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

My name is Bob Moussa and I live in Lewiston, I joined my family in 2017 but they arrived in Lewiston in October 2015. First of all, I am delighted with this very laudable initiative towards parents who take care of a disabled child. This is the case for me, as I care for my autistic son who is 21 years old and I am here to testify in support of *LD 296*.

Among the concerns of giving care to a disabled child, there is nothing more frustrating than not having the proper support from our government, in my case, just because of our immigration status, and that poses a real problem for our family.

Indeed, my son lost his eligibility for MaineCare, found himself stuck at home without participating in any supervision within the framework of the activities related to the Day Program offered by the benefit of MaineCare. We have to spend a lot of time trying to satisfy his needs and giving him undivided attention 7/7.

The tragedy is we must wait until his immigration status is granted in order to be able to reinstate his eligibility to services he needs. Passing this bill will be a great relief for us as a family. His mental health is worsening since last Sunday and ended up in the ER in St Mary's.

Without MaineCare's coverage and support from the state and healthcare institutions, we are faced with a real tragedy and feel powerless in this challenging situation. I stopped working to care for him and I know it's even more frustrating for my son not to get professional supervision for his mental health, his moral and physical well-being.

I do not know how many families could be in this kind of situation, but if at the legislative level, the State of Maine could provide for something transitional in this case of eligibility and pass this bill is promising, in the face of this harsh reality that we are living in, our daily life would be much better relieved.

Many other families and I am yearning for your attention to stand with families who feel lonely in their daily caregiving activities for their loved ones and would benefit from the passage of this law. Thank you.