

LD 1984 Testimony, January 27th, 2020

Zivi Osher

Hi, my name is Zivi Osher. And I am here to testify in favor of LD 1984. My friend, Benny, is 19 years old. I've known him for my whole life and as far back as I can remember he always had an Aid helping him out. As he should. Benny has severe autism. This service is necessary for his well being and for the well-being of his family. But because this program is not fully funded, in less than two years Benny will turn 21 and he will age out of the services he has now and he will go onto a waitlist. He will wake up one day and all of a sudden he won't have the services he needs. Benny will join the almost 2000 others waiting, well their families struggle to provide the secure life that they used to have.

People with special needs don't stop having those needs after they enter adulthood. They grow older, but they still have special needs, and we have a duty to provide for those needs.

When someone is waitlisted, they don't just disappear until they're finally provided services. They suffer. They suffer from a lack of help. A lack of stability. Nobody should have to struggle to take care of a loved one just because they have special needs.

People can't afford to be waitlisted for services like these. Benny can't afford it, and his family can't afford it. And I can't afford seeing him and his family struggle without these services. Becoming an adult does not make ones special needs go away and it should not make them lose services. That's why today we must decide to fully fund this program and end the waitlists so we can provide necessary services to Benny all the other Maine adults with disabilities.