

ACTION ALERT for RECALL LD 852

An **Action Alert** from Blue Hill and Belfast parents about the **Recall of LD 852**. Please contact your legislators to ask them to support recalling this bill **as soon as possible**. Contacting your legislators is critical, since a Recall requires 2/3 majority in both houses.

LD 852: Resolve, To Establish a Task Force To Study the Coordination of Services and Expansion of Educational Programs for Young Adults with Disabilities

This bill was spearheaded by Dr. Gregory Bush, a parent in Blue Hill, working with a handful of other parents in the Blue Hill and Belfast areas. LD 852 was forged from the deep concern these parents had about “the cliff” which their young adults faced after leaving high school; a cliff of limited opportunities which often causes social isolation and regression. The intent of the proposed task force is to research what is currently happening from the transition phase through young adulthood for individuals with DD, in all aspects of their lives. With this information the Task Force will then be in a position to ascertain what works and does not work for this population; this can help clarify existing gaps and how these individuals can be served more appropriately.

HISTORY: Public Testimony was given by parents in March 2019 before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. The bill then proceeded to be passed unanimously in both the House and the Senate and was made into an Emergency Measure. However, late at night on the last legislative day, LD 852 “fell off the table” and was pronounced “dead”. It is our goal to resuscitate LD 852 through a Recall, since the issues which drove it initially are still in existence, and are very likely to worsen.

According to the 2015 Autism Spectrum Disorders Report, prepared by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and the Maine Department of Education “the crest of the epidemic of individuals with autism is now reaching adulthood, implying the need for significant changes in our adult services system”. The 2017 report states that “the number of individuals with autism has increased 1,019% since the year 2000”.

Young adults with DD, their parents and caregivers face great odds in understanding available state benefits, negotiating the bureaucratic boxes, and such related problems as transportation and available local programs, (if indeed any programs exist). Continuing educational opportunities at Universities, Community Colleges and Technical Centers are practically nonexistent, even

though many of these individuals have incredible talents and skills, especially in the fields of art, technology and the natural world. Individuals with autism have the lowest employment rates of all disabilities. Many low-income families face multiple challenges in taking care of their kids beyond high school. Overall, the civil rights of this target population needs greater statewide attention.

Please contact your legislators before December 31st 2019 to request their support.

Sponsors of this bill, LD 852, are:

Rep. Sarah Pebworth of Blue Hill, and Senator Louie Louchini of Hancock.

Co-sponsors of this bill include:

Senator Justin Chenette of York, Rep. Richard Farnsworth of Portland, Rep. Thom Harnett of Gardiner, Rep. Frances Head of Bethel, Rep. Holly Stover of Boothbay.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about LD 852, please contact either:

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or

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