



February 6, 2024

Representative Mark Pearson, Chair
Children and Family Law Committee

RE: HB 1573-FN – relative to oversight of and criteria for residential placement of children.

Dear Chairman Pearson and Members of the Children and Family Law Committee,

My name is Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, and I am the Executive Director of the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council). I am providing testimony on behalf of the DD Council membership, which believes that HB 1573-FN would have a positive impact on the disability community.

The DD Council is a federally funded agency that is dedicated to the pursuit of dignity and justice, authentic community inclusion, cultural competency, and self-determination for all New Hampshire residents with developmental disabilities. The DD Council carries out its mission through education, advocacy, and collaboration on initiatives that encourage full integration and inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities as required in the Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act, 2000.

Our Council, by law is comprised of at least 60% people with developmental disabilities and parents or guardians of people with developmental disabilities. These members are volunteers advocating for disability justice. This involves advocating for public policies and initiatives that remove barriers and create opportunities in all areas of life for people with disabilities. We believe that:

- Increased oversight and monitoring helps protect vulnerable children placed in residential settings from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Licensing and certification, especially for out-of-state placements, is critical to ensure the welfare and safety of NH children residing in childcare institutions or treatment programs.

- The state of New Hampshire has a responsibility to ensure that placements of this kind rare, limited, and brief to prevent harm to the child's mental or physical well-being.
- Placement in residential facilities should not be done in a way that causes community or social isolation and does not create emotional or social deprivation and community isolation.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions about how this would have a positive impact on children and families impacted by disabilities.

Sincerely Yours,

Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, MSW
Executive Director