

Testimony from Aishah Wolfstone

*LD 210 An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027*

**Joint Standing Committees on Appropriation and Financial Affairs Committee  
& Health and Human Services Committee**

February 12, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Gattine, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of both the Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services Committees.

My name is Aishah Wolfstone, I am currently a Direct Support Professional at Work First, Inc and I reside in Farmington, Maine.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony on the biennial budget.

I am writing to express my disappointment and concern over the decision to not support the Direct Support Professionals ( DSP) in the State of Maine and ask that you restore and allocate the funding for the cost of living adjustments for MaineCare services in the biennial budget LD 210.

I have been working as a DSP for over 15 years. I love my job working with adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities by supporting them in the Community and at their Employment, however, I am at the end of my ability to continue in this position if my wages do not begin to cover the cost of my moderate lifestyle.

The DSP position is rewarding in many ways. It is also exhausting on days where the individual's behaviors are challenging with requiring DSP's to engage with high energy and skills honed for many trying situations.

I have worked in retail receiving as much pay without the trying situations, DSP's experience, and without the need for specialized training. However as mentioned above 'I love my job!'

The individuals with intellectual disabilities with whom I work need quality, consistent care with the training and expertise to follow through on meeting their needs. If the State of Maine does not start financially supporting this care, many individuals will be further marginalized and have their services drop in quality or be discontinued.

Receiving a cost-of-living adjustment seems like a very reasonable request for the qualified, quality care that all DSP's provide to this very vulnerable population.

***Please restore COLAs for all MaineCare services in the biennial budget.***

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Aishah Wolfstone

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