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To the Appropriations Committee:

Please KEEP cost of living adjustments for direct care workers in the budget.

The direct care worker field is already greatly understaffed. To withhold cost of living adjustments would encourage people to leave the field.

My son who is autistic and needs 24-7 care receives less than 50% of services he is approved for, because of lack of staff. People keep leaving the field.

Eliminating COLA would decrease wages for DSPs in the face of rising prices, decrease services for disabled people, impact family employment as a result, and affect the Maine economy. as a result.

Please keep COLA for direct care workers in the budget.

Thank you,

Dixie Redmond