



Testimony [INDIVIDUAL NAME HERE]

*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 24, 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 Aimee. I am a Registered Nurse at OHI, and I reside in Bangor.

I appreciate the opportunity to come before the Committee to provide testimony on the biennial budget.

I am here today to ask for your support to restore and allocate the funding needed for January 1, 2025, MaineCare service rate cost of living adjustments in the biennial budget, LD 210.

*I have worked with adults with ID, DD, and Brain injury for over a decade and helped them develop skills needed and improve their best life.*

*The lack of COLA and increase in Maine care rates really makes the retention of DSP's extremely hard. Why would someone take on such a demanding job for so little pay? It comes with an enormous amount of responsibility. Many prospective employees turn to working at fast food chains as the pay is equal to or greater than our current start rate and they have far less responsibility!*

I'm deeply concerned about the suspension of the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for MaineCare rates.

- It goes without saying, that without COLA, food and bills will be harder to pay for
- The loss of COLA will put many families in financial distress as they are unable to make ends meet, forcing them to seek employment elsewhere and quite possibly crippling the service industry.
- My biggest concern is that agencies that provide support to those in need will be forced to stop services to people and their families due to the state not living up to their end of the bargain. Individuals will be left without the support they need due to the lack of funding. This could even result in some avoidable deaths, and exploitations that could be prevented if adequate funding was kept in place!

My job doesn't stop at the end of shift. Those I serve often call me on off hours to help them or their families. A few months ago, I was asked to check on a young man who lived pretty much independently that had not been eating and acting strange. This resulted in my making contact and finding him unresponsive. He was transported to the Hospital and is still there. The point being, he is alive because I was there to check on him! What if my organization had shut down due to lack of funding or retainable staff due to low wages? The outcome could have been far different!

- One of the people we support had her mother come down with stage 4 lung cancer. This person already had

crippling anxiety and reached out to talk. A family meeting was arranged and options were explained. As an organization we contributed to a care basket for both her and her mother. The outcome has not been determined but all members of the family know that we support them and will in any way we can.

**In short, I feel that without COLA and an increase in Mainecare rates you very well may not just be putting the DSP's and their agencies in peril, but the lives of many that they serve as well. I have done my best to keep this civil and not let my emotions interfere with my message.**

***Please restore the January 1, COLA for all MaineCare rates in the biennial budget.***

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

Aimee Ayers, RN

**Pronouns: She/Her/Hers [What is this?](#)**

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