

Ashley Cottle
Oxford
LD 979

I have worked in health care as an activities assistant and activities director. The consistent theme I have seen in long term care, residential care and assisted living is we do not have enough beds to support our residents living with dementia. The changes that this bill would have, would negatively affect these facilities and likely make them not sustainable. Staffing increases this bill requires while we continue to be in a staffing deficit is not the answer.

If our memory care residents lose their home due to these changes, what will we do to support them? where will they go? We know that changes for residents living with dementia and moves can be proven to cause decline and disruption in their lives. It is our duty as health care workers, community members, and government officials to offer the best possible care we can. The affects of this bill are so great that we will be doing a huge disservice to our community. Before voting for this bill, imagine what you might do if you needed healthcare services for your spouse and you either couldn't get them, they receive less than exemplary care due to the unsustainable changes, or their environment becomes unsafe for them. How would you feel? At my workplace we had a surveyor misread a regulation for our ALF memory care unit and read a regulation from a different level of care that resulted in a near miss elopement due to the change made. This was luckily corrected quickly, and the resident did not elope. However, If we force more regulations like this particular one to change and be the same across the board for different levels of care, we may put many residents safety at risk, just like that mistake did for us.

I understand this testimony is fairly vague, and does not encompass everything in this bill, but I hope you consider this input. From the prospective of a full-time healthcare worker who interacts with staff, residents and family members from all walks of life, everyday, that moving forward with this bill would be detrimental to the state of Maine and our loved ones.