



**Kristen Cloutier**

33 Charles St

Lewiston, ME 04240

Phone: (207) 807-1637

[Kristen.Cloutier@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Kristen.Cloutier@legislature.maine.gov)

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

April 23, 2025

***Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of  
LD 1613, An Act to Establish Maine's Care Force to Address the State's Health Care Crisis  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services***

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94, which includes part of my hometown of Lewiston. I am testifying in support of **LD 1613, An Act to Establish Maine's Care Force to Address the State's Health Care Crisis**.

There are so many Mainers whose needs are going unmet. We face overlapping crises in housing, childcare, and elder care, while those providing essential caregiving services are experiencing unprecedented burnout and turnover.

LD 1613 would create a robust system to recruit, train, certify, and employ caregivers across our state. These aren't volunteers or temporary workers – they're career professionals receiving: competitive wages reflecting their skills and the value of their work; comprehensive benefits supporting their wellbeing; career advancement opportunities; and professional recognition long overdue in this field. This is proactive workforce planning that ensures no community or family bears the burden of care alone.

In exchange for a three-year commitment, Care Force members receive specialized training across multiple domains including childcare development and education, elder care and gerontology, and specialized support for adults with disabilities.

Maine's Care Force solves three critical problems simultaneously:

1. It addresses our immediate caregiving crisis.
2. It creates meaningful, stable careers for Mainers seeking purpose-driven work.
3. It elevates caregiving to its rightful place as an essential profession worthy of respect and fair compensation.

The Maine Care Force is a strategic investment in our social infrastructure and economic future, recognizing that the care economy is the foundation of our society. By passing this legislation, Maine can pioneer a national approach to caregiving that acknowledges it as fundamental to our collective wellbeing and a cornerstone of our economic strategy.

Thank you for your consideration.

