

Colleen brown  
Whiting  
LD 1932

To the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

I am writing in support of LD 1932, An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development.

I support this bill because I am seeing firsthand what the shortage of essential support workers is doing to families in my community. I have several friends whose parents are living with dementia and other serious, age-related health conditions. They are struggling to find and keep workers to provide care, supervision, and basic support so their loved ones can remain safe and at home.

These families are not asking for luxury care. They are asking for reliable help so their parents can bathe, eat, take medications, and live with dignity. But the reality is that there simply are not enough workers willing or able to take these jobs because the pay is low, the work is demanding, and the turnover is constant.

When essential support workers are unavailable, the consequences are serious. Families are forced to quit their jobs to provide care. Seniors are pushed into emergency rooms or nursing facilities. People who could be supported in the community instead fall into crisis. That is harder on families and far more expensive for the State.

LD 1932 is an important step toward stabilizing this workforce by supporting recruitment, training, and retention. These workers are the backbone of Maine's health and human services system, and without them, everything else begins to fail.

I urge the committee to support LD 1932 and to recognize the vital role essential support workers play in keeping Maine families and communities whole.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.