

In Support of LD 1932, An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development, Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

January 20, 2026

Dear Chair Ingwersen, Chair Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Jon McGovern, and I am from Bangor. I work at Speaking Up for Us (SUFU). I am here today to speak in support of LD 1932, because this bill is important to people with disabilities and to the workers who support us every day.

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are a huge part of our lives. When there are not enough DSPs, people like me miss out on our day programs, our jobs, our activities, and our goals. Sometimes we are stuck at home because there is no staff available. That is not the life any of us want.

I also want to talk about DSP burnout. Many DSPs work long hours, including overnight shifts, and they get tired and worn out. When staff are burned out, it affects the support we receive. It also makes people leave the job, which creates even more shortages. Better pay, better training, and better support for DSPs would help keep good workers in the field.

Training is another big issue. DSPs get training, but sometimes they don't use what they learned once they are out in the community. Good training should help DSPs understand the people they support, help us reach our goals, and help us live meaningful lives. Training should also include HCBS principles, like helping people make choices, get out into the community, and do activities that are not the same every day.

I also want to talk about waiver homes and group homes. The people who work in these homes help individuals live safely and independently. They help with personal care, medical needs, and community activities. These workers deserve strong wages, good training, and respect for the important work they do.

I believe the Legislature should visit programs and waiver homes to see firsthand what DSPs do every day. It is hard to understand the challenges and the importance of this work without seeing it in person.

LD 1932 also includes changes to wage requirements, including raising essential support worker wages to 140% of minimum wage in 2027. I support raising wages sooner rather than later. People with disabilities matter, and the workers who support us

matter too. We should not have to wait years for improvements that affect our daily lives.

The bill also requires that DSPs paid through MaineCare must earn at least 125% of minimum wage, and this requirement begins six months after the reimbursement increase takes effect. This helps protect workers from being underpaid.

The bill also looks at the care gap, which means the difference between the number of service hours a person is approved for and the number of hours they actually receive. Many people are missing services because there are not enough workers. The bill requires the state to study this problem, identify data gaps, and create a system for ongoing reporting so people with disabilities can get the services they need.

The bill also creates new plans to improve training and use technology to manage staff work hours and that plan is now due in 2027, and the bill also requires a 5-year plan to create consistent training and better career progress for essential support workers. These changes match what I talked about in my testimony: better training, better support, and making sure people with disabilities get the services they need.

I support LD 1932 because it will help bring more people into this field, keep good workers from leaving, and improve the quality of services for people with disabilities. This bill is an important step toward making sure we can live our best lives with the support we need.

Thank you for your time and for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Jon McGovern

Bangor, Maine