

Cindy Allen
Portland
LD 1932

Testimony of Cindy Allen

LD 1932: An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
January 20, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 1932: An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development.^[L]_[SEP]
My name is Cindy Allen I am a direct support professional/CRMA with 3Rivers.

This is how it all began: In the height of Maine's devastating Ice Storm of 1998. I remember the day clearly. I had a scheduled interview and showed up wearing oversized boots, trudging through the snowstorm. The lady interviewing me also had on equally crazy boots. She told me she hadn't expected me to show up due to the weather. We walked together, gathering emergency supplies as we talked, and I was hired on the spot. My first shift involved walking down a dead-end street, unable to pass by in a car because of fallen trees, leaving the area looking like a war zone. Now, in January 2026, I reflect on 28 years as a DSP—it's been the best decision of my life. When I was 13, I had a summer job at a day program working with people with disabilities; I knew I would be a caregiver one day.

Being a direct support professional is more than just a job; it's a calling. I love this work because I get to make a real, lasting impact on people's lives every day. I support individuals as they build independence and grow in confidence. I value the relationships that come with this role. Each person I support has their own story, personality, and goals. Getting to know them, earning their trust, and sharing both challenges and triumphs creates a truly special bond. It's not just about providing care, it's about being a consistent, supportive presence.

I love being a direct support professional, because it aligns with my values and gives me purpose. Every day, I get to help someone live a fuller, more independent life and that's something I'm proud of. Some of my most memorable moments.

Helping people — and their families, housemates, and my coworkers — has always been at the heart of my work. That includes providing end-of-life care for so many beautiful souls over the years.

Sometimes that care has meant holding someone's hand for the final hours of their journey home. Other times, it has meant standing together in celebration of a life well lived.

In one moment that will stay with me forever, a team of dedicated Direct Support Professionals came together around one individual at the end of their life. We spent an entire weekend together — sharing blankets, taking turns resting wherever we could, and supporting one another through unforgettable moments of connection and compassion. There was the warmth of home-cooked meals, the quiet work of cleaning, music filling the room, candlelight glowing softly, heartfelt prayers, and tender, loving care. Each person honored this individual in their own way, and together it formed something truly beautiful.

This remarkable person left the world exactly on their own terms, just as they had lived every day of their life.

As they took their final breath, the words spoken were, "I knew you from the other side."

That moment stays with me. It still hits hard.

Party time! Birthdays, holidays or "just because", making it big and over the top each and every

time are opportunities to create lasting impressions as both grand and subtle gestures can yield immense delight and memories. I like to do this as a DSP.

Cooking: not just to nourish, but to create something extraordinary — the presentation

that sparks joy, the quick photo sent to parents: “Look what she made for us, Mom.” It’s that excitement.

It’s moments like these that stay with you long after the shift ends.

My most cherished daily experience is the joy of seeing my client smile. When another thanks me for providing her with a sense of security and appreciates my dedication, it validates my work. In those moments, I know I've contributed to their happiness and well-being. There's great satisfaction in knowing that simply being there for them makes a difference.

In 2026, no one should have to choose between doing work that truly matters — caring for another human being — and earning enough to survive. Direct Support Professionals deserve both. LD 1932 moves us closer to that reality, and I urge you to support it.

Thank you for your time and consideration and support of LD 1932

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