

Testimony of Tina Stivers

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*.

My name is Tina Stivers

- I worked for 30 years in this field, first in Special Ed, then as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) and lastly a program manager. I have a daughter who receives services in assisted living
- I have a unique perspective having worn so many hats.
- DSPs are grossly undervalued. They have the tremendous responsibility of providing a safe environment for vulnerable folks. They work long hours in an often emotionally and physically demanding workplace.
- Even in the best of times, staff turnover is high. My daughter sees staff as extended family and is disappointed and sad with every change which then leads to depression, feeling she is responsible in some way for staff often disappearing with no warning or explanation. This in turn puts pressure on remaining staff to bear the consequences
- I fear that the added pressures of being frontline workers without a fair increase in wages, will create an unsustainable workforce leading to unsafe conditions for our loved ones.
- My family members and I are very concerned about my daughter's welfare now and in the future if this wage inequality continues.
- Governor Mills, DHHS and the state legislature need to consider how they would act if they had loved ones in need of care. It's insulting that a DSP is so poorly compensated for the level of care they provide.
- It's so frustrating that similar bills have passed but not fully funded.

- Please pass LD1932 and follow through with funding. These dedicated caregivers need a living wage in order to attract new staff and sustain a safe and enriching environment for special needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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