

January 19, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee.

We are involved parents of an adult male child who has multiple disabilities that have worsened over the years. These challenges impact his mobility, vision, emotional stability, dexterity, and daily living skills as an adult. We are extremely aware of how much care our son requires. He lived with us until he was 22. As concerned parents, we want the best care available for our child, to keep him healthy, safe, and able to live a quality life

We need Direct Support Professionals (DSP's) to be given the appropriate tools and compensation to be able to support our child's needs (<https://legislature.maine.gov/doc/3503>). The needs of everyone are unique and can be challenging. What we have seen over the last 20 years is DSP's leaving their jobs for higher wages in other fields with less responsibility and lower stress levels. These DSP jobs demand highly skilled, well-trained workers to meet the extreme responsibilities and the physical and emotional demands of the DSP jobs. Some group homes are understaffed, which makes a DSP's job incredibly stressful. DSP's need to be compensated appropriately for the dedication they put forth. DSP's are vital to our son's life, program, and our life. DSP's are highly skilled, dedicated professionals deserving of commensurate wages for the responsibilities they endure.

We believe that Direct Support Professionals are providing desperately needed skills to care for our loved ones. We feel that improving the compensation provided for these hard-working professionals will increase the DSP workforce and ensure that the support needed is available.

Sincerely,

Steve and Jan Wironen