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

**Renate Scholz, Chair of MAPCA Board of Directors,
and owner of Home Instead (Cumberland County)**

January 20, 2026

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

It is my honor as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Maine Association of Personal Care Agencies to speak in favor of LD 1932: An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development. Many others today will provide the details of the numerous benefits of the bill, so I won't use my time today to reiterate those.

MAPCA is a diverse group of licensed personal care providers representing agencies from both the private pay and MaineCare funded portions of this work. You will hear today about the need for higher reimbursement rates and the business reasons that the rates support the care that is needed in Maine. But, as noted, MAPCA also represents agencies like mine who are not connected to the MaineCare system and are private pay only. Knowing this, and knowing that higher reimbursement rates could only drive up the salaries of direct support workers who work for private pay agencies without a direct line to an increase in revenue to pay for it, why would MAPCA be in favor of a bill that has the potential to increase costs for a number of its members?

I urge you to remember what this bill is designed to do: support and enhance the essential care workforce. For many generations, the act of providing care has been unpaid work done mostly by women in the family, and it has been undervalued and overlooked, even though many of us who have cared for family members could tell you that it is the most difficult – and most rewarding – job we have ever performed. Because of many societal changes, including a growing population of older Mainers, these tasks are now often performed by direct support workers, but the work remains undervalued and overlooked.

This bill provides for additional funding for MaineCare, which will in turn raise salaries. It will help us understand the data about how many more staff we really need to serve older Mainers and people with disabilities. It will strengthen your Essential Support

Workforce Advisory Committee by including representatives of the personal care industry and the long-term care ombudsman program.

In short, this bill has the potential to raise the prestige of working in this field. And that benefits the entire continuum of care in the State of Maine. At some point in our lives, most of us need personal care support for ourselves or a family member. I urge you to support this bill to help ensure that the care is available when someone in your community, or you yourself, are in need.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Renate Scholz
Chair, MAPCA Board of Directors
Owner, Home Instead (Cumberland County)