



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

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

January 20, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. 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 Jennifer Putnam. I am the CEO of Waypoint Maine. Waypoint is located in southern and western Maine and provides a wide range of services for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism, including a Pre-k through Grade 5 special purpose private school, case management and care coordination for children and adults and day programs and residential services for adults. With over 350 employees, we've supported thousands of adults, children and families for sixty years.

Every day, we are faced with challenging staffing issues due to the direct care workforce shortage in Maine. In order to ensure we meet the complex support needs of our clients, we pay an inordinate amount of overtime to our employees to keep our group homes staffed. LD 1932 is a bill born of necessity and the need for a competitive wage is more pronounced than ever, given the lack of full COLA to our rates. The rates have not kept up with the state's mandate for minimum wage increases each year.

At Waypoint, we have long since squeezed out all of the efficiencies we can think of from a business standpoint. We have extremely low administrative costs and own all of our group homes. Two years ago, we created a premium pay staffing model for our homes, which includes three day and four day work weeks of 12-hour shifts, with base hourly pay during the week and premium pay (time and a half) on weekends for all staff. These efforts have been largely successful in retaining current staff and are appealing to new staff as well. Many of our DSP's work second jobs and this model enables them to do so.

Here is an example of how this works: A DSP works Thursday-Saturday, 12 hours per shift. For Thursday & Friday, the pay is \$17 per hour. On Saturday, pay is \$25.50 per hour. The *weekly hourly wage* is a blended hourly rate of \$19.83 per hour.

Given this successful staffing and pay model, we ask that you strongly consider any unintended downstream effects of a mandatory hourly wage floor. While all of our DSP's earn a *weekly* hourly wage that exceeds 125% of minimum wage, the hourly base pay does not meet that minimum. The impact of establishing a wage floor on an hourly basis instead of as part of a



weekly hourly average would be devastating to the model Waypoint, and others throughout Maine, have successfully implemented.

We want to thank Speaker Fecteau and the LD 1932 sponsors for supporting our DSP workforce and direct care services through this bill.

It is so important to all of in Maine that we are able to support people with intellectual disabilities and autism with the care they need and deserve. The only way to do that is to support the direct care workforce with higher rates and therefore higher wages. Please offer your support for LD 1932.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Putnam

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