

Testimony of Ellie Duley

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 Ellie Duley and I sit on the board of LEAP (Life Enrichment Advancing People) as well as chair the Quality Assurance Committee. This private, nonprofit empowers individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities as they lead fulfilling lives through inclusive support, advocacy and individualized services. I also have a non-verbal adult son with autism who is supported by LEAP in Farmington, ME.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Speaker Fecteau and bill sponsors for supporting this workforce and direct care services through this bill. Without this support and these workers, my young adult might be unable to live independently from me. This support keeps me in the workforce. Without support, I would need to drastically change my work schedule and move to a residence that supports his needs and provides for his safety.

My committee work with the Quality Assurance committee, addresses both compliance and quality of all people supported by and employed by LEAP. One thing that always comes to the forefront is our dedicated workers having to make the tough decision to leave LEAP for more money in other, and often less skilled jobs. A competitive wage would attract and keep quality workers for supported individuals. It's truly heartbreaking to see my son bond with an individual just to have that same individual make the hard decision to seek employment elsewhere where they can afford to feed their family. This is especially important as a full COLA was recently denied these workers.

For my son, Jon, and all the other people supported by LEAP and other agencies across the state who provide these essential services, I am asking you to support LD 1932.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Ellie Duley

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