

Testimony of Lianne Lewin-Grover, resident of Biddeford.

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

January 20, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Lianne Lewin-Grover I am a resident of Biddeford. I support LD 1932 and appreciate Speaker Fecteau and the other cosponsors for bringing this legislation forward.

I've been working in the Community Support field for 13 years, and have worked my way up from a Direct Support Professional to Program Coordinator within Creative Trails. I now oversee two locations in Southern Maine, supporting over 70 individuals and employing 10 staff members across both program locations.

My locations specialize in art, while supporting individuals in connecting with their local and national communities. Individuals that attend our programs are active members of the Portland and Biddeford arts scene, with work that has also been displayed nationally. The individuals that attend my programs are passionate about art, many of whom have the goal to work as independent artists – just as many of my colleagues from art college are now pursuing. To support individuals in their aspirations, I employ highly skilled Direct Support Professionals, all of whom have college degrees in the field of visual arts. It's important to have such highly skilled staff, because this is more than an "entry level" job. Their expertise and technical knowledge enable them to empower the artists we support to further their own craft, while creating work to display and sell in community galleries, art festivals, and exhibitions at a sophisticated level as any other working artist does.

Wages in this field do not reflect the amount of skill and commitment required of Direct Support Professionals, and do not make longevity and retention possible. We know therapeutically that consistency and routine have a huge impact for the people we support. We know that reliable support staff are an integral factor for these individuals to successfully engage in their community, live full and autonomous lives, and contribute to those around them.

Over the years the majority of staff I've seen move on have done so because they need to take higher paying jobs. Their heart is in this work, their passion is in this work - but they need to be fairly compensated for the work they do, so they can sustainably remain in this field. In recent years it has become more difficult to fill staffing vacancies, leading to disruption of services, and reduced number of spots available for individuals who are

seeking community support services. I've heard directly from the individuals I support about how staffing shortages in residential settings result in being stuck in their homes, with limited supports and access to meaningful activities in their communities.

This bill is a step in the right direction to improve wages and enhance the workforce. Thank you for listening to my perspective. Please vote Ought to Pass.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lianne Lewin-Grover". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "L".

Lianne Lewin-Grover