

Christine Vincent
Greene
LD 1932

Testimony in Support of LD 1932: An Act to Raise Direct Care Worker Wages to 140% of the Minimum Wage

Honorable Members of the Health & Human Services Committee:

My name is Christine Vincent, and I am writing in strong support of LD 1932, which proposes increasing wages for direct care workers to 140% of the minimum wage. I urge you to view this bill not simply as a wage adjustment, but as a critical investment in Maine's most vulnerable citizens and the workforce that supports them every day. Direct care workers are the backbone of Maine's home and community-based services system. They support adults with intellectual disabilities, autism, mental health diagnoses, and physical disabilities so they can live safely and with dignity in their own homes and communities. These workers assist with medication administration, personal care, mobility, behavioral supports, communication, transportation, community inclusion, and crisis prevention. In many cases, they are the difference between stability and institutionalization.

Despite the complexity and responsibility of this role, direct care work continues to be treated as "entry-level" employment in compensation alone. In reality, it is anything but.

Direct care workers are required to complete extensive initial and ongoing training, including mandatory certifications, medication administration, emergency procedures, behavioral supports, infection control, and person-centered planning. They must maintain compliance with state licensing rules and MaineCare requirements, document services accurately, and adapt to the highly individualized needs of the people they support. This is skilled, professional work that demands judgment, compassion, reliability, and accountability.

Yet wages remain so low that many direct care workers are forced to take on multiple jobs simply to make ends meet. Even more concerning, many ultimately leave the direct care field altogether in search of better-paying employment, despite their training, experience, and commitment to the people they serve. Providers across Maine struggle to recruit and retain staff not because people lack the heart for this work, but because wages do not align with the expectations, responsibilities, or cost of living. High turnover disrupts continuity of care, increases risk to individuals served, and places enormous strain on remaining staff, families, and the broader system.

Raising wages to 140% of the minimum wage is a reasonable and necessary step toward recognizing the true value of this workforce. It reflects the reality that caring for people with complex needs is not unskilled labor — it is essential, specialized work. Competitive wages improve retention, reduce burnout, and allow workers to remain in the field they are trained for rather than being pushed out by economic necessity. Most importantly, this investment results in safer, more consistent, and higher-quality care for Maine citizens who rely on these services.

Maine has long affirmed its commitment to community-based care over institutionalization. That commitment cannot be upheld without a stable, adequately compensated direct care workforce. LD 1932 supports that goal in a practical and responsible way.

I respectfully urge you to support LD 1932 and to stand with the direct care workers who quietly and faithfully care for others every day — often at personal financial sacrifice. They deserve wages that reflect both the skill they bring and the responsibility they carry.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your thoughtful consideration.
Respectfully submitted,

Christine Vincent
CEO
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