



**Oral Testimony of the
Acquired Brain Injury Advisory Council of Maine
January 20, 2026**

In support of LD 1932 An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce
Development

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the committee on Health and Human Services

My name is Jim Beaudry. I am a veteran and a survivor of three brain injuries, including an anoxic injury from a near-drowning in 1984, a stroke in 2012, and then a traumatic brain injury in 2019. On behalf of the Acquired Brain Injury Advisory Council (ABIAC), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding LD 1932. I am proud to serve on the Council and have dedicated my life to brain injury because it is such a struggle and people with brain injury need all the help they can get. In fact, when I die, I will leave my brain to Mt. Sinai for research to promote the advancement of science.

I have several conditions secondary to brain injury, and I qualify for an in-home care worker. I've been waiting for help for over three years. I am a resident of Rockland, and the absence of direct care workers in my area is adversely impacting my ability to live independently in the community. I need assistance with meal preparation, planning and sequencing. I am looking to you today to help change that, to establish livable wages for workers who are so needed in Maine communities.

Brain injury is a significant and ongoing public health issue in Maine. Approximately 20 percent of Maine's population is living with brain injury. More than 6,000 Mainers are expected to experience a traumatic brain injury in 2026 alone and that number does not include all acquired brain injuries, meaning the true impact is even greater. The ABIAC holds public forums across the state every year to hear directly from people living with brain injuries. Year after year, one of the most common concerns we hear is access to care. For some Mainers with brain injury, services technically exist, but they are simply not accessible due to a shortage of direct support workers. This issue has remained persistent over time and continues to be one of the most significant barriers to recovery, independence, and quality of life.

Improving access to services is one of the Council's core, ongoing goals. We are charged with advocating for expanded and improved services, including addressing barriers related to

waitlists, provider capacity, workforce shortages, and out-of-state placements. Without a stable and adequately compensated direct care workforce, progress in any of these areas is limited.

The workforce crisis is especially evident within the Brain Injury Waiver. Currently, there are 37 funded offers, yet 281 individuals remain on the waitlist. More people are waiting for services than are being served. The average wait for waiver services is 4.6 years, and even those with the highest priority may wait one to two years. As a result, 45 Maine residents have been placed out of state due to a lack of specialized services available in Maine.

Enhancing wages and supporting the direct care workforce will have a meaningful and immediate impact, improving access to services, reducing waitlists, strengthening provider capacity, and keeping Mainers with brain injury supported in their own communities. For these reasons, the Acquired Brain Injury Advisory Council urges you to support this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Beaudry
ABIAC co-chair