

Testimony in Support of LD 1932:

An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development

Good afternoon members of the Committee.

My name is Brianna Riley, and I am a Regional Supervisor at Assistance Plus. I am here today to speak about the critical importance of in-home support services for our elderly and vulnerable citizens, and why LD 1932 is so essential to the future of this workforce.

A Personal Support Specialist is not just a “helper.” A PSS is the reason someone is able to wake up in their own bed in the morning, in the home they love. They are there not only to support individuals physically, but emotionally as well. They provide companionship, reassurance, and dignity. You cannot put a price on the peace of mind they provide—yet for far too long, we have.

When my grandmother’s health began to decline, I was able to see firsthand the true value of in-home care. She was living with my mother at the time, and my mom was still working full time. Because a Personal Support Specialist was able to come into the home and care for my grandmother, my mom was able to remain a daughter—not a full-time caregiver. That boundary mattered. It allowed us to spend meaningful, intimate time with my grandmother, while still knowing her safety, comfort, and daily needs were being professionally addressed.

In-home care is not just about comfort—it is about safety. Having a trained professional assist with medication reminders, mobility, and meal preparation significantly reduces the risk of falls and other preventable accidents. These incidents often result in costly hospitalizations, long-term complications, and a loss of independence that many never fully recover from. PSS services help prevent these outcomes and reduce strain on our healthcare system.

I urge you to increase compensation and support for Personal Support Specialists. From both a personal and professional perspective, I have seen how vital these workers truly are. They provide high-level care in complex, often isolated home environments with very little immediate support. When we underpay PSS workers, we put the stability and safety of our most vulnerable citizens at risk.

Every time a Personal Support Specialist leaves this field for a higher-paying job in retail or fast food, a senior or a person with a disability loses more than a worker—they lose their independence, their routine, and often their primary connection to the world.

LD 1932 is an investment in people. It is an investment in dignity, independence, and the ability for Maine residents to safely age at home. We must value and support the workforce that makes this possible.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your commitment to Maine's families and communities. I strongly urge you to support LD 1932.

Brianna Riley