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To the Chair and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1932, *An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development*. This bill is deeply personal to me because I started my career as a Personal Support Specialist in 1996 at the age of 17. I followed a career ladder gaining experience in home care, and it led me to run our family-owned home care and mental health business 30 years later. I know firsthand the challenges and the profound responsibility that come with caring for Maine's most vulnerable residents.

My Journey and Perspective

When I began as a PSS, I earned minimum wage while performing work that required skill, compassion, and resilience. I saw coworkers leave the field—not because they lacked dedication, but because they could not afford to stay. Today, as a CEO, I still carry those experiences with me. They shape how I lead and why LD 1932 is essential.

Why LD 1932 Matters

- **Fair Compensation:** Raising reimbursement rates to 140% of minimum wage acknowledges the value of this work and helps stabilize a workforce that is in crisis.
- **Training and Advancement:** Standardized training and career pathways will professionalize the role and create opportunities for growth.
- **Data and Planning:** The bill's reporting requirements ensure transparency and allow us to plan for Maine's aging population and growing care needs.
- **Innovation:** Embracing technology and workforce development strategies will make care delivery more efficient and sustainable.

The Human Impact

Behind every statistic is a person—a worker who wants to provide quality care and a client who depends on it. When wages are too low, care hours go unfilled, and families suffer. This bill is not just policy; it is a lifeline for thousands of Mainers.

Call to Action

I urge you to pass LD 1932. It honors the dignity of essential support workers, strengthens our care system, and ensures Maine is prepared for the future. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to this critical issue.

Jillian Jolicoeur CEO

Assistance Plus Home Care, Behavioral Health, and Intellectual Disability Services

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