



Incorporated in 1967

February 17, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, esteemed members of Appropriations and Financial affairs committee. I am here by zoom to testify in favor of LD 2212 – An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027.

My name is Tammy Prosser. I work for Community Living Association in Houlton Maine. I've worked there for 13 years. I've done many different jobs during my life but being a DSP is the job that gives me the best feeling of helping people.

During my time as a DSP, I've worked in our Residential Homes, in our Day Programs and as a Job Coach which is what I do currently. I love the job I do now because it helps the people I work with do work and receive a paycheck. As a Direct Support Professional, I feel as if I make a difference in the lives of all the people I work with. The job can be difficult at times, having to do personal care, giving medication and basically helping people be safe at all times while respecting their rights and autonomy.

CLA has been in business for a long time. In my thirteen years here I have seen it close more than half of its residential group homes. We used to have nine and we now have four. As I understand it, this is mostly due to a lack of staffing.

The people I work with need as much consistency as possible when working with them. They have gone through numerous changes in their life including where they live, things there're allowed to do, and possibly most importantly who works for them as caregivers. Even though CLA has some staff that have been here for many years (longer than me even) we still have a lot of staff turnover. This makes it hard on the people we serve.

When full COLA's have been given CLA has made sure to pass them on to staff in larger raises. Partial COLA's have meant small raises. The workforce is small in Houlton and we compete for staff with many other places.

CLA has had to close and downsize programs due to no staff/funding. There are much fewer residential options to live in Aroostook County. I've heard of people with disabilities having to move to Southern Maine because they have nowhere to live in their hometown. This is not fair!

I love my job as a DSP and it's one that I want to continue. It can be hard at times making ends meet but I love being able to help people live their lives and be safe, happy and taken care of. It's getting harder to want to stay in the field when I could make more money elsewhere in other jobs. Being able to count on a full stable COLA would help me do this as well as keep more programs from closing in Aroostook. Please consider funding the full COLA in this budget.

Administrative offices: 18 Military Street, Houlton, Maine 04730
207-532-9446 www.cla-maine.org

Community Living Association is a non-discriminatory organization and an Equal Opportunity Employer



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Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony.

Tammy Prosser

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