



## Testimony in Opposition

LD 2228: An Act to Eliminate Inactive Boards and Commissions  
Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government  
March 18, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. My name is Nicole Marchesi. I am the Public Policy Advocate for the Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

The Ombudsman Program provides statewide advocacy for older and disabled adults residents in nursing homes, assisted living and residential care, and for recipients of home care and participants in adult day services. Additionally, the program serves patients in hospitals that experience barriers in accessing long-term services and supports when they are ready for discharge.

I am here today to provide testimony in opposition to this legislation, which proposes the elimination of several boards and commissions, including the Essential Support Workforce Advisory Committee.

The goal of the Essential Support Workforce Advisory Committee is an important step forward in addressing the Essential Support Workforce crisis in the state of Maine. The committee aims to examine and monitor staffing levels, make recommendations on recruitment and retention of essential care workers, including benefit cliff pilot project and data collection efforts. This has a direct impact on workers providing care for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and those with behavioral health challenges.

As advocates for long-term care consumers across Maine, it is essential that we confront the challenges that directly affect both the quality of care and the quality of life for older adults in our state. Adding a representative from the Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to the Essential Support Workforce Advisory Committee, as proposed in *LD 1932, An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development* would likely strengthen the

committee's perspective in a meaningful way.

In February 2022, the Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program established the Direct Care and Support Professional Advisory Council. This Council empowers caregivers across Maine to use their collective voice to influence important workforce decisions. By bringing together direct care and support professionals from all regions of the state, the Council creates opportunities to share lived experiences, build leadership and advocacy skills, and shape policy changes that can transform direct care roles.

One Council member, Stephanie Hatcher, was elected to serve on the Essential Support Workforce Advisory Committee. In this role, she brings a vital frontline perspective to the ongoing staffing crisis facing our state.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to oppose this legislation and preserve the Essential Support Workforce Advisory Committee.

Thank you for your consideration.