



Testimony Lisa E. Shaw

*LD 210 An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027*

**Joint Standing Committees on Appropriation and Financial Affairs Committee  
& Health and Human Services Committee**

February 12, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Gattine, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of both the Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services Committees.

My name is Lisa Shaw. I am one of the Team Leaders, the immediate supervisor for a Waiver Home with SKILLS Inc., and I reside in Saint Albans, Maine.

I appreciate the opportunity to come before the Committee to provide testimony on the biennial budget.

**I am here today to ask for you to restore and allocate funding for cost of living adjustments for MaineCare services in the biennial budget, LD 210.**

I have worked 14 years cumulative, starting out in 1994, as a DSP in a 15 bed boarding home in Hartland, ME. I am currently in my 6th year with SKILLS Inc and my third time as an employee here. One of the most rewarding parts of my job is helping the individuals we support to succeed, whether it is succeeding in learning ways they can control their emotions, learning positive interactions with the community, or learning what it takes for the individuals to be able to self-administer their own medications.

I'm deeply concerned about the suspension of the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for MaineCare rates. I live alone and pay rent, car payment and pay all utilities. The cost of living keeps going up and I just recently paid \$449.90 for 100 gallons of kerosene for my home. This is almost half a bi-weekly pay check. My rent went up another \$100 dollars last year, and will be going up again this year. The loss of a COLA is causing a real concern of the probability that I will have to think about alternative forms of housing. The cost of healthy food is already an issue, fresh fruit and vegetables are something I love and won't be able to afford.

As a Team leader for most of the past 6 years with SKILLS Inc, I have spent a lot of time training new hires, and this training doesn't stop. It takes years to help someone develop into a great DSP. Unfortunately, a good number of employees leave employment for jobs elsewhere that pay better, and the cycle starts again. This negatively impacts the individuals we support in so many ways. Most of the folks we support thrive on consistency, and they can't get the consistency they need when they are repetitively dealing with new staff or staff that are unfamiliar with them and that don't know them. The uncertainty they deal with on a regular basis, causes increased anxiety in some of these individuals and it negatively impacts their quality of life.

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I love working for SKILLS, Inc. and although I have no intentions of changing what I am doing for work or where I work, as a supervisor, a second job is not an option. I need to have availability 24 hours a day for the home I supervise. I currently work overtime to meet basic needs. In 2024, approximately 20% of my gross income was earned as overtime. I will continue to need to work overtime to afford food, clothing, car payment, auto repairs and monthly bills.

***Please restore COLAs for all MaineCare services in the biennial budget.***

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

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