



Denise Tepler  
Senator, District 24

THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**Testimony of Senator Denise Tepler introducing L.D. 980, *Resolve, to Create the Commission to Improve the Oversight of the Long-term Care System***  
**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services**  
March 28, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the hardworking Health and Human Services Committee, I am Denise Tepler, representing Senate District 24, all of Sagadahoc County and the town of Dresden in Lincoln County. I am here today to present LD 980, “Resolve, to Create the Commission to Improve the Oversight of the Long-term Care System.”

I will not bore you with statistics around Maine’s status as a state of many older citizens, who, like all of us, are aging. But I will remind you that improving the way we treat older Mainers living in long-term care facilities today may improve your own experience with aging. Like taxes, it is inevitable.

In the last legislative session, you wisely approved a study on our long-term care workforce, which enabled us to recognize many of the difficulties we face in attracting, training and retaining long-term care workers. Hopefully, all the recommendations of that Commission will eventually be carried out. However, that commission did not fully address how we are doing with appropriate care for our elders living in facilities. We have not set standards for our desired outcomes.

A National Institute of Health article entitled, “Improving the Quality of Long Term Care,”<sup>1</sup> has a chapter on how quality of care can be improved through external oversight. It lists government oversight as most central to that improvement. My understanding of our current system is that we are coming up short in our oversight of these facilities.

Our approach has been muddled through a hodgepodge of laws and regulations that are not guided by an agreed upon set of standards or desired outcomes. The NIH article, which I recommend to the Committee, has a three-legged approach to an effective system in improving quality in long term care oversight. The first is setting quality standards; the second is “designing *survey processes* and procedures to measure and monitor actual conditions of residents or clients and *to assess compliance*,” and the third is deciding on and imposing penalties for noncompliance.

Our current system may include elements of these three legs of an appropriate regulatory scheme for oversight of our long-term care system, but we are not there yet. I would like the commission recommended in this resolve to help move us toward a more organized and appropriate system of oversight which will help improve the care older Mainers receive.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK224499/>



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Several advocates have recommended amendments to the bill, such as including a representative of the hospitals on the commission. I am open to these changes if the committee feels they would improve the bill.

Please vote ought to pass on L.D. 980. Thank you. I am happy to answer any question that I can.