

**Testimony of Michael Tyler, Managing Partner
Sandy River Company**

Testimony before the Committee on Health and Human Services in support of

L.D. 1720 An Act Regarding Benefits and Training for Long-term Care Workers

Public Hearing: Friday May 2, 2025, at 10:00 AM

Senators Ingwersen, Representatives Meyer, as well as Distinguished Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

I would like to thank the sponsors of L.D. 1720, especially Senator Rachel Talbot Ross who presented the bill.

My name is Michael Tyler, and I am the Managing Partner of the Sandy River Company, Chairman of the Board of Maine Health Care Association, and Member of State Workforce Board. I have been involved with operations and development of Long-Term Care facilities in Maine for over 40 years. I am the owner, operator, developer or consultant associated with over 30 facilities in the State of Maine. I am testifying in support of L.D. 1720, which will provide support for the training, hiring, and retention of essential long-term care employees.

The services provided by Maine's Long-term care facilities are essential services, just like public safety and Law enforcement. The provision of these services is not optional, they are required and order to continue these Maine must support new and innovative concepts and programs.

Labor shortages continue to be the primary barrier to providing all Mainers access to across the entire state. Maine facilities continue to have empty beds and closed units due to lack of staff, leaving hospitals backed up with patients waiting for long term care placements, and families without options.

This bill offers practical, non-mandatory solutions to grow and stabilize the long-term care workforce.

As originally drafted, this bill would have allowed long-term care providers access to the state's health and retirement plans, so they can offer more affordable options to their employees, helping them to compete with other higher-paying sectors. We understand that an amendment is being proposed that would eliminate this section of the bill.

The bill also provides direct MaineCare reimbursement for CNA training, English as a second language programs and interpreter services --- in a simple and clear fashion, without more red-tape and hoops to jump through.

Expanded CNA exam language options to help qualified Mainer's enter the field are needed.

The bill supports providers by giving them tools to improve recruitment, retention, and support the needed care of Maine's most vulnerable citizens.

We have seen nearly 30 long-term care facilities either closed or convert to a lower acuity level of care over the last 10 years. Nearly every day there is news of another hospital closing or downsizing. The instability and financial challenges in the long-term care sector affect acute care. Without available **staffed** long-term care capacity, patients end up stuck in hospitals and the financial impact can be significant.

I'm encouraging you to support L.D. 1720.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and I would be happy to answer any questions.