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THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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**Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services on LD 1932, An
Act to Support Essential Workers and Enhance Workforce Development
January 20, 2026**

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford, and I have the privilege of representing the people of 14 communities in Western Maine. I am pleased to cosponsor LD 1932, "An Act to Support Essential Workers and Enhance Workforce Development."

Today, thousands of Mainers are not receiving the care they are approved for because our state does not have enough essential support workers. When Maine is not competitive in the labor market, we see chronic staffing shortages and high turnover among providers. In practice, that means older Mainers and people with disabilities sitting on waitlists, caregivers stretched to unsafe ratios, and disruptions in care for individuals who depend on stable, skilled support.

LD 1932 takes meaningful steps toward addressing this shortage. It increases the labor reimbursement rate, helping Maine attract and retain a qualified workforce. The bill also strengthens training and credentialing, encourages the responsible use of technology, and ensures we have the data needed to plan effectively for the future. By expanding stakeholder input and establishing clearer reporting on the true cost of meeting care needs, the Legislature will be better equipped to make informed, responsible decisions.

Families, older adults, and people with disabilities should not be forced out of the workforce or left without essential services because the State failed to plan ahead. This bill helps Maine meet its commitments, supports long-term sustainability, and reflects a responsible approach to caring for our neighbors. I urge the Committee to support LD 1932.

Thank you for your time and consideration.