



Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Dalton Reed, and I am a direct care worker in a residential care setting in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1932.

In my role, I support residents with daily living needs, including personal care, mobility, medication assistance, meals, and emotional well-being. Many of the individuals we serve live with dementia or complex medical conditions and depend on direct care staff to help them live safely, comfortably, and with dignity.

Continuity of care is essential in assisted living environments. Residents experience better outcomes when supported by familiar caregivers who understand their routines, preferences, and baseline health. Unfortunately, low wages contribute to high staff turnover, which disrupts continuity, increases anxiety among residents, and can compromise safety.

Direct care work is both skilled and demanding. Caregivers carry significant responsibility and are often the first to recognize subtle changes in a resident's condition—changes that can prevent medical emergencies or avoidable hospitalizations. Despite this level of responsibility, compensation has not kept pace with the skills, accountability, and emotional labor required for this work.

I can speak to this challenge personally. In order to make ends meet, I routinely work more than 60 hours per week. While I am committed to the residents I serve, this level of workload is not sustainable and contributes to burnout across the workforce.

Staffing shortages further strain the system. When positions remain unfilled, remaining staff are stretched thin, increasing burnout and limiting the ability to provide consistent, high-quality care. Increased funding to support higher wages would help recruit and retain qualified caregivers, stabilize staffing levels, and improve outcomes for residents.

As Maine's population continues to age, the demand for assisted living services will only increase. LD 1932 represents a critical investment in both the direct care workforce and the vulnerable residents who rely on these services each day.

I respectfully urge you to support LD 1932 and help ensure safe, consistent, and dignified care for Maine's residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.