



**Testimony of Kristin Overton, Chesterville ME
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LD 1932: An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development

January 20, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee.

My name is Kristin Overton and I am the Executive Director of SKILLS, Inc., a non-profit organization in central Maine, serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities for more than 60 years. I also serve as Vice President for the MACSP Board of Directors and I co-Chair the Training and Credentialing Work Group of the Essential Care and Support Workforce Partnership. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 1932.

SKILLS provides community-based support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We employ more than 140 employees and support over 125 people. Our services include community support, employment and vocational assistance, and residential support, both in an individual's home or one of our group homes.

As a provider and as the Chair of the MACSP Community Supports and Employment Services Comm, I hear regularly about the need for competitive wages and benefits to attract workers to stabilize and grow the workforce; something that has become even more difficult in the past 15 months. Although we thank the champions on this committee for the partial increases to COLA; we are still more than 4% behind where we should be.



With stagnant rates and increasing costs of doing business, a rate study completed in 2023 but not implemented nor budgeted to be, this is critical legislation. This is not easy work, this is not entry level work. It should not be compensated at minimum wage or close to.

We also cannot lose sight of the other ways that LD 1932 supports and lifts the industry as a whole. At SKILLS, DSP's receive more than 150 hours of non-billable training in the first year alone to meet the requirements to be a DSP. A new curriculum is partially implemented and under development which stacks PSS and DSP certifications. LD 1932 takes this credentialing and training a step further to make a universal credential that is more portable and wastes less resources if an individual changes the target population they work with.

The data requirements in this bill are a necessary step for the industry to effectively analyze and predict utilization, budget shortfalls, and need. Right now, there is no way to know what the actual cost of services would be if there were no access issues. We are in a vicious cycle that providers cannot come out of without fixing a flawed system. The annual budget cannot include the actual cost to provide all the services that have been approved by the State if they cannot predict what that is. As service access improves and more unfilled hours are filled, the cost increases. If the budget is based on looking backwards at lagging indicators, we'll never get to a place where we are looking ahead and appropriately budgeting. As the support system improves its delivery of approved services, and individuals increasingly receive the supports they are authorized and entitled to, there will still be a budget shortfall due to the business data not being available to know what should be budgeted.

Thank you for your time and I strongly encourage you to support LF 1932. I'm happy to take questions.