



**Testimony of Abel Eng**

**LD 1932: An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development**

**Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services**

**January 20, 2026**

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 1932: *An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development*.

My name is Abel Eng; I am one of the Program Supports at LEAP. I help lead a hard-working team to support four adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We work with our supported individuals to build routines and habits for them to succeed in all aspects of their lives, whether that be emotional, interpersonal, or professional. Our support is sometimes as simple as cooking and cleaning, but this line of work is so much more. From community integration and budgeting to crisis management and physical restraints, this is a multi-faceted field and requires well rounded staff to provide quality care. This kind of care is exhausting.

Any healthcare professional could tell you, any parent would say the same thing: you can't care for others without caring for yourself. Unfortunately, for many at LEAP, the latter isn't always feasible. Many direct support professionals must decide between a light paycheck and overtime. Choose between supporting themselves and their families or providing the quality care this company expects. Many choose a third option and simply leave the field. This is unfair not only to our staff, either living paycheck-to-paycheck or stuck looking for another job, but to those we support. This is a population that is chronically underserved in the workforce, in the community, and many times in their own families. LD1932 brings higher wages to direct support professionals, yes, but it's more than that. This bill would also bring in a wave of dedicated staff to serve Maine's most vulnerable.

Thank you, Speaker Fecteau, and each of this bill's sponsors, for supporting our workforce and direct care workers throughout the state.

Abel Eng

A handwritten signature of the name "Abel Eng" in black ink.

aeng@leapcommunity.org