

January 20, 2026

Testimony in support of LD 1932- An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development

Good afternoon Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyers, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. I am here to testify in support of LD 1932

My name is Paul Armstrong, I am the Lead Advocacy Volunteer for AARP Maine, and I live in the town of Palermo in Waldo County. I receive support services and most likely will be using them more in the future. I do truly appreciate the services I do get. It only takes a quick look at the demographics in Maine to see that many more people will qualify for these services in the coming years. Now is the time to provide guidance and oversight, secure living wages, develop a better workforce, make plans for worker retention, and explore possible technical options

My experience with essential support workers began several years ago when my disability got worse and it was harder for me to do some of the everyday things many take for granted.. It was my local Area Agency on Aging- Spectrum Generations- that helped me determine I was eligible for such service. I was put in touch with Catholic Charities of Maine and put in an application. My application was approved but it took well over 2 years for me to actually get services due to a lack of workers in my rural area. They do have a 'hire your own' program and I tried that but it took so long for the approval process for my applicant that she found work elsewhere. I have had a local to me worker for about 2 years now and he does a good job for me within the time allocated for me. I receive 2 hours of help a week.

By job definition my worker can shop for me, clean, do my laundry, prepare meals, and other household chores. A big problem is there is no way he can do all these things for me and be done in 2 hours; it would be over an hour just to go to the store and get a couple of things for me due to my rural area. 2 Hours? A load of laundry done and maybe another started. Floors vacuumed and mopped? Dusting, windows? It's a tight schedule. Another problem is my services are on Mondays and most holidays fall on a Monday. If there's a holiday I do not get services. If my worker is sick or has time off, I do not get services. There is no such thing as a replacement worker nor make up time later in the week. If my worker can't show up I get no services that week. As a result, I at one time have gone over a month of no services due to illness and holidays and vacations.

By voting ought to pass on LD 1932, the opportunity to improve these valuable services in Maine will be for the better for seniors and the disabled. My thanks to all the sponsors and co-sponsors for addressing this important issue and I thank this committee for its time and consideration.

Paul Armstrong
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