



Woodfords FAMILY SERVICES

Joint Standing Committees on Appropriation and Financial Affairs & Health and Human Services February 17, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Rotondo, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Gattine, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 2122, the Governor's Supplemental Budget.

My name is Sarah Hunt and I am the Program Manager of Community Support at Woodfords Family Services. I am also a DSP & have been a DSP for 20 years.

I am here today to urge you to include the annual cost-of-living adjustments required for MaineCare services under Maine law in the supplemental budget. These adjustments are not optional luxuries. They are essential to sustaining the workforce that cares for some of Maine's most vulnerable citizens.

For two decades, I have done this work because I love it. It has never been about the money. But love does not pay rent. Love does not buy groceries. Love does not keep heat in our homes.

My care as a DSP has included performing CPR on a person I supported. I was able to extend his life long enough for his loved ones to arrive at the hospital and say goodbye. The loved ones I speak of were not family, they were all DSP's.

I have cared for people on both their best days & worst days. I have cared for people through the very last days of their lives. In those final moments, I made sure the smallest details were not forgotten. I washed and styled their hair. I gently applied aromatherapy lotion to their skin; making sure they were at ease experiencing pleasant, calming smells. I put chapstick on their lips so they would not dry out. I painted their fingernails, played their favorite music, read their favorite books, put on their favorite movies. I also held their hand as they took their final breaths as there was no family involved to provide such care.

I wasn't just providing care. I was providing dignity, compassion and most importantly. Love. I am not special or unique, this is the level of care high quality DSPs provide on a daily basis. All while wondering if they are going to have to skip paying rent or buying groceries this pay period.

I have been fortunate to grow into management roles over the years. But I still work on the floor every day providing direct care to assist with my team with the emotional demand that is put on them as DSPs. Now, as a manager, I carry a new worry; not about whether our staff care or work hard enough, but about how long they can afford to stay. This effects the people supported the most as they develop strong bonds with the DSPs they work with.

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Without consistent cost-of-living increases, we do not just risk turnover. We risk losing the DSPs that enhance lives, create purpose, provide engagement and meaning to a supported person's life. The compassionate ones. The staff who go the extra mile. The ones who care, who love and provide support; on the good days and bad days. The ones washing the hair, putting on the chapstick, and holding the hands of a person as they pass.

When wages stagnate while the cost of living rises, dedication alone cannot sustain a workforce.

So today, I ask you to think personally.

Think about who you would want caring for you.

For your children.

For your grandchildren.

For your parents.

For your siblings.

Would you want someone exhausted from working two or three jobs just to survive? Or would you want a stable, experienced professional who can commit fully to providing thoughtful, consistent, compassionate care?

Annual cost-of-living adjustments are required under Maine law because lawmakers understood this reality. Thank you for your past support. These adjustments are a simple but crucial way to protect the integrity of care in our communities. Please honor that commitment. Approve the annual cost-of-living adjustment for MaineCare services.

Because this work has always been about love. The people who provide that love deserve the ability to live, too.

Thank you.

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