



**Testimony of Jessica Fay for  
The Maine Council on Aging  
March 18, 2026  
In Opposition to LD 2228**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and Honorable Members of the State and Local Government Committee,

My name is Jess Fay and I am the Policy and Advocacy Director for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA), a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 140 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings. I am also representing the Essential Care and Support Workforce Partnership. The Partnership is a coalition of over 300 providers, care workers and family members collaborating to build the conditions needed to support a strong care workforce.

I am here to testify against LD 2228 - specifically lines 21 and 22 of the bill. These lines repeal the Essential Support Workforce Advisory Committee (ESWAC). This Committee was created in the 130th Legislature as LD 898 to “[establish] the Essential Support Workforce Advisory Committee to advise the Legislature, the Governor and state agencies on issues involving the essential support workforce.” It has a statutory sunset in 2028.

ESWAC has been meeting regularly since its creation, most recently on Dec.10 2025. The 2025 Annual Report<sup>1</sup> can be found on the ESWAC webpage ([www.maine.gov/labor/eswa](http://www.maine.gov/labor/eswa)) along with information about the membership of the Committee and how to join the Interested Parties List.

Essential care and support workers are people who provide care and support to older people, people with physical and intellectual disabilities, and people with behavioral health challenges in home, residential care, treatment and community settings. People who do this physically and emotionally demanding work provide the foundation for our entire health care system.

Attracting and retaining workers using various policies and tools has been ongoing work and ESWAC has been an integral part of that work. ESWAC has made recommendations that have begun to bear fruit and two of their recommendations are included in LD 1932 “An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development” voted unanimously out of the Health and Human Services Committee on March 3, 2026. One of the provisions in LD 1932 adds two new members to ESWAC, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and a statewide organization representing personal care agencies. These additions will strengthen the Committee’s ability to collaborate.

ESWAC is an active Committee and should not be eliminated. Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.

Jess Fay  
[jfay@mainecouncilonaging.org](mailto:jfay@mainecouncilonaging.org)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/labor/docs/2026/eswa/2025ReportforCommitteeReview.pdf>