

Darla Chafin
Augusta

LD 878 To Increase Mainecare Reimbursement Rates for Services Provided by Direct Care Workers

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, members of the Committee:

I come to speak in favor of this bill. It has warmed my heart to see how many submissions have been made to correct these long-neglected employees. I hope that in what may be a rare form of decision-making these days that you will consider all proposals along these lines, discuss them with their presenters and come up with a solution that may begin to stabilize an experiment that started with the closure of Pineland Center, had growing pains, and now has hit the point I feared when it first was proposed. The idea that money would be saved, really the least important goal of the closure, could not be met while setting up a new program, new philosophy, and still serving a growing population, one that unhappily continues to grow. I do believe money can be saved, but only through providing adequate and appropriate care, and that means considering the value and giving the appropriate respect, support, and training to those with the title of DSP. No one knows the people they work with better than their families and those who care for them. Hopefully, we are past the point where no one has time to understand the problems or pain that may have been experienced. The old school of "She's just gotta learn!" is being replaced by the knowledge that with trust and understanding, everyone is happier and less of a problem. Gaining such trust and understanding while proving that life can be better is not an easy job. But I think it might even be less expensive and I know it can be a much better environment with even the most difficult becoming part of the team. Do begin to value these people who choose to work through the past hopefully unintentional fears and become a friend, as well as a teacher and a protector.

Thank you for considering the value of all people..