



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Sen. Claxton, Rep. Meyer and members of the HHS Committee:

I am writing in support as a co-sponsor of LD 878 "Resolve, To Increase MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for Services Provided by Direct Care Workers" presented by Sen. Keim, and also in support of LD's 283, 1157, 1204, 1267, 1469 and 1477.

Each of these bills and resolves would certainly be helpful towards stabilizing the direct care workforce. As this Committee knows, Maine is in the midst of a long-term care workforce shortage. There are a number of proposals that have either come before you or will shortly. I am confident that with collaboration between the Legislature and the Department of Health and Human Services, we can begin to address this crisis in a meaningful and comprehensive way.

These bills each address, in diverse ways, the concepts that the Commission To Study Long-Term Care Workforce Issues raised in our January 2020 report. You can access a copy of that report here:

<http://legislature.maine.gov/doc/3852>

COVID -19 has only exacerbated the issues that the Commission identified. There are a number of different ways to increase the pay scale for the direct-care workforce and it is exciting that the committee is in the position to determine what might be the best path forward. Increases are necessary and it will also be important that any increase in rates be directed towards increasing the pay of the workforce.

Cost-of-living increases could also be built into any increase in worker pay in order to keep up with inflation and also any increases in the minimum wage.

I am looking forward to this conversation so that we can stabilize the long-term care workforce on behalf of older Mainers, Mainers with physical and intellectual disabilities and the dedicated and compassionate people who provide this essential care.

Thanks to the Committee for considering these proposals as part of the potential solutions to this ongoing crisis.