

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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April 20, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Laurel Libby, and I reside in Auburn. I represent House District 64, which is Minot and part of Auburn. I come before you today to present LD 1157 “An Act to Ensure MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for Home and Community-based Services for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism Are Adjusted in Accordance with Increases In State and Municipal Minimum Wage.”

There are a number of bills that address the issue of reimbursement rates this session, but LD 1157 specifically addresses the instance of a municipal minimum wage increase, which is particularly important when the municipal minimum wage is higher than the state minimum wage. We have recently seen Portland raise their minimum wage, which will leave providers in that area scrambling to hire workers for home and community-based services if they are not able to pay an equitable wage with MaineCare following the state minimum wage. The discrepancy in wages will likely lead to an increased shortage in workers, in a critical industry that is already chronically short-staffed.

This bill requires DHHS to increase its reimbursement rates to providers of home and community-based services to persons with intellectual disabilities or autism by the same amount of increase required under the minimum wage law, for both state and municipal minimum wage increases.

Thank you for your time and attention, and I’m happy to answer any questions you may have.