

Regina Bowie  
Presque Isle

By Ms. Regina Bowie.

My name is Ms. Regina Bowie. I am a self-advocate. I am the current board member and treasurer for Speaking Up for Us in Maine.

I am writing to submit testimony for LD1573.

What I would like to say is the following. I encourage all to look at the long-term care workforce issues as being a semi-retired caregiver myself. I trained and worked at more than one long-term care facility.

I have witnessed firsthand the issues with jobs at these places. I am hoping you can look at and improve the following.

1. The regulations that govern the workplaces of long-term care facilities are very confusing. It is very hard for an individual with any type of disability or not to gain employment there if they can't understand the rules simply because the rules are hard to interpret correctly. The language needs to be simplified for all so all who wish to work this type of work can be thoroughly interpreted and there are fewer mistakes made.

2. What needs to be looked at and corrected as well as a system of checks and balances that work and make sense for all involved to make sure each facility is following the rules and regulations that govern each long-term facility in this state. Follow up and educating all is important too.

3 If a mistake is made by an employee at the facility instead of totally not allowing the person to do their job, allow them to make the mistake correctly instead of taking them away from it completely and not explaining anything to the employee. That can make an employee feel horrible and can feel that they are not doing a good job. Good communication is key in this particular field of work. Teach them how to learn from their mistakes and keep an eye on them but wisely do it so they don't feel like they are not doing their job or feel like why are thinking "Why are they hard on me or breathing down on my neck?" Encourage the workers more often can make a difference working in this type of job setting if you can keep your employees or not.

4. I also am a strong supporter of training to keep an eye on employee burnout or change in work habits. I have seen too often that it is not paid attention to or ignored, and that can cause way too much friction and customers and clients leaving because the job, or living at the long-term care facility is no longer a fit for them.

5. Lastly. I also suggest if a commission is going to be formed to look into this also includes people who represent, former customers who currently live (used to live) there, and former employees who used to work at long-term care facilities. That way you have fair representation from all aspects for the commission.

That is all I have to say for my testimony for LD1573. Thank you for reading my testimony today. Have a wonderful day to all.