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### Written Testimony in Support of LD 1573

An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues

Health and Human Services Committee

Monday, May 3, 2021

Good morning, Senator Claxton, Representative Myer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 1573 An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues.

My name is Elizabeth Korson, I have been working as a DSP since 2015 and am now the Program Manager of The Studio at Gallant Therapy Services, an arts based community supports based program in Augusta.

I feel there are many reasons why supporting DSPs with 125% minimum wage is needed, but I will specifically share my concern in how frequently DSPs turnover before and during the pandemic. My concern with this is that in my years of working in this field I have found that clients' potential to achieve their goals and thrive socially, behaviorally and individually is best achieved when they are supported by staff whom they share a positive relationship with. Consistency in approach of support as well as for the client to trust their support staff is key. With the rate of turnover due to insufficient pay this trust and success for the client is drastically lacking. The success of the work comes in building relationships, and no relationships can be built when new staff are constantly being introduced and then leaving.

The dignity of the clients is also a concern for me, whereas I work in community supports based programming, I have to think of those living in residential settings. If I were in need of supports to use the bathroom, shower, or handle any other form of self care I would much prefer to do so with the support of someone I know and trust. This is a right that any human being deserves. Dignity. How can we provide this when the turnover is as substantial as it is now?

Thank you for your time and consideration

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