

Good morning Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Ray Nagel, and I am the Executive Director of Independence Association in Brunswick, Maine. Thank you for allowing me to testify in favor of LD 1573: An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues

IA has been in business almost 55 years and in that time, we have never experienced the chaos and turnover that we have experienced over the last 5-years. Rates for Providers who serve people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities has suffered for many years. The original formula designed in 2007 and still used today centers on the average DSP wage. The beauty of the original formula is that as the average wage for DSPS go up, the reimbursement rate follows. In 2007 the formula was based on an average wage of \$10.36. At that time the minimum wage was \$7.50. Today, the minimum wage is \$12.15, but the rate of reimbursement accounts for an average wage of \$11.21 per hour.

Pegging the reimbursement rate to 125% of minimum wage will allow providers to continue to serve people with Intellectual and Developmental disabilities.

Thank you.

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