

May 4, 2021

Testimony in Favor of:

LD 1573, "An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues"

Dear Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Marco Orlando, I live in Brewer Maine. I am a person who lives with a disability and I am on the Speaking Up For Us (SUFU) Board of Directors. I am submitting this testimony in favor of LD 1573.

I have been on both sides of social and human services since the age of 14. I am someone who has received services, and also someone who has been a support worker. This makes it so that I can speak to a lot of the issues within the service system. One of these issues is that direct care workers do not get paid well. I am in support that LD 1573 would establish a 2-year rebasing requirement to set and increase the rates for HCBS services.

I also agree that the direct care work force should get paid more than the minimum wage in Maine. Direct care work can be a thankless position. It takes a special skill set for someone to be successful at it and move up the ranks where they are working. Training and supervision needs are not always clear or consistent, and it can be hard for anyone in the field to know what they do well and where they may need a little extra help without proper feedback on their work performance from a competent supervisor.

I am also in support of establishing the Long-term Care Workforce Oversight Advisory Committee. I would recommend that this committee also have representation from a self-advocate and a family member.

It would be my personal recommendation to support this bill to help level the playing field and bring some consistency and stability to a line of work that doesn't have much of either at times.

Thank you for the chance to submit my testimony about dental care for Mainers.

Sincerely,

Marco Orlando
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