COMMUNITY CONNECT ME

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

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 Deborah Riordan Dionne. I live in Topsham, and I'm a founding member of Community Connect Maine. My daughter has lifelong disabilities, with a specific diagnosis of cerebral palsy and an intellectual disability. Kate has lived in a group home in Brunswick for the past 19 years. I am writing my testimony in **support of LD 1573**.

I would like to begin by thanking Representative Jessica Fay for her steadfast leadership on the Long-term Workforce Commission, in addition to her sponsorship of several other bills that support the collaborative work of this commission, to include LD 1573. The recommendations of this well represented Long-term Workforce Commission should be applauded, as they fully addressed the crisis that exists across the spectrum of care. Unfortunately the pandemic caused LD 2109 to be derailed during the 129th Legislative session.

My daughter has overcome monumental obstacles in her 41 years of life. I am in awe of her spirit and tenacity to keep going and stay positive. I have no idea how she does what she does, and day after day. I would like for you to imagine living every day of your life without speech, the ability to write or type on a keyboard, the need to use a walker because without it you will lose your balance and fall face first, break bones, and shatter teeth, over and over again. In addition, you are dependent upon someone else to assist you with your most personal daily needs: showering, using the toilet, and cleaning you up after your body causes for you to be incontinent while sleeping, and to keep you safe, healthy and engaged with your peers and friends in your community. A DSP is profession that requires compassion, empathy, training, skills, and the ability to build trust with the people you support. Imagine that in four short years you have had 83 DSPs funnel in and out of your life and your home. 83 different people for Kate to muster up all of her positive energy and tenacity, to once again start from the beginning, as she struggles to communicate with that person so trust can be developed because Kate needs help with her most personal human needs.

Two different times since my daughter has lived in her home, the loss and change in staff has caused my daughter such severe anxiety that she to refused to eat meals, chose to sleep over participating in favorite activities, and injured herself and lashed out at others. It was devastating for me to see her so defeated and depressed. These behaviors are representative of what happens when needs are not met, and as a result require so many more resources to undo all the harm that has been done.

Maine needs to finally recognize that DSP caregiving is an important and worthy profession, should make recruiting and retaining this workforce a priority, and finally acknowledge that this is not a minimum wage job. My worst fear is that if we do not act, more Direct Service Providers will no longer be able staff the homes and community support programs that serve Mainers with lifelong disabilities, like my daughter.

I could not be more grateful to the DSPs who work in my daughter’s group home to support her and her five housemates. They deserve to her paid no less that 125% of minimum wage and with a 2 year rebasing requirement. **Supporting LD 1573 is the right thing to do.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah Riordan Dionne, Topsham

Community Connect Maine

deborah.r.dionne@gmail.com

207-522-4290

Deborah Riordan Dionne
Topsham

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

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 Deborah Riordan Dionne. I live in Topsham, and I'm a founding member of Community Connect Maine. My daughter has lifelong disabilities, with a specific diagnosis of cerebral palsy and an intellectual disability. Kate has lived in a group home in Brunswick for the past 19 years. I am writing my testimony in support of LD 1573.

I would like to begin by thanking Representative Jessica Fay for her steadfast leadership on the Long-term Workforce Commission, in addition to her sponsorship of several other bills that support the collaborative work of this commission, to include LD 1573. The recommendations of this well represented Long-term Workforce Commission should be applauded, as they fully addressed the crisis that exists across the spectrum of care. Unfortunately the pandemic caused LD 2109 to be derailed during the 129th Legislative session.

My daughter has overcome monumental obstacles in her 41 years of life. I am in awe of her spirit and tenacity to keep going and stay positive. I have no idea how she does what she does, and day after day. I would like for you to imagine living every day of your life without speech, the ability to write or type on a keyboard, the need to use a walker because without it you will lose your balance and fall face first, break bones, and shatter teeth, over and over again. In addition, you are dependent upon someone else to assist you with your most personal daily needs: showering, using the toilet, and cleaning you up after your body causes for you to be incontinent while sleeping, and to keep you safe, healthy and engaged with your peers and friends in your community. A DSP is profession that requires compassion, empathy, training, skills, and the ability to build trust with the people you support. Imagine that in four short years you have had 83 DSPs funnel in and out of your life and your home. 83 different people for Kate to muster up all of her positive energy and tenacity, to once again start from the beginning, as she struggles to communicate with that person so trust can be developed because Kate needs help with her most personal human needs.

Two different times since my daughter has lived in her home, the loss and change in staff has caused my daughter such severe anxiety that she to refused to eat meals, chose to sleep over participating in favorite activities, and injured herself and lashed out at others. It was devastating for me to see her so defeated and depressed. These behaviors are representative of what happens when needs are not met, and as a result require so many more resources to undo all the harm that has been done.

Maine needs to finally recognize that DSP caregiving is an important and worthy profession, should make recruiting and retaining this workforce a priority, and finally acknowledge that this is not a minimum wage job. My worst fear is that if we do not act, more Direct Service Providers will no longer be able staff the homes and community support programs that serve Mainers with lifelong disabilities, like my daughter.

I could not be more grateful to the DSPs who work in my daughter's group home to support her and her five housemates. They deserve to her paid no less that 125% of minimum wage and with a 2 year rebasing requirement. Supporting LD 1573 is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah Riordan Dionne, Topsham
Community Connect Maine
deborah.r.dionne@gmail.com
207-522-4290

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

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 Deborah Riordan Dionne. I live in Topsham, and I'm a founding member of Community Connect Maine. My daughter has lifelong disabilities, with a specific diagnosis of cerebral palsy and an intellectual disability. Kate has lived in a group home in Brunswick for the past 19 years. I am writing my testimony in support of LD 1573.

I would like to begin by thanking Representative Jessica Fay for her steadfast leadership on the Long-term Workforce Commission, in addition to her sponsorship of several other bills that support the collaborative work of this commission, to include LD 1573. The recommendations of this well represented Long-term Workforce Commission should be applauded, as they fully addressed the crisis that exists across the spectrum of care. Unfortunately the pandemic caused LD 2109 to be derailed during the 129th Legislative session.

My daughter has overcome monumental obstacles in her 41 years of life. I am in awe of her spirit and tenacity to keep going and stay positive. I have no idea how she does what she does, and day after day. I would like for you to imagine living every day of your life without speech, the ability to write or type on a keyboard, the need to use a walker because without it you will lose your balance and fall face first, break bones, and shatter teeth, over and over again. In addition, you are dependent upon someone else to assist you with your most personal daily needs: showering, using the toilet, and cleaning you up after your body causes for you to be incontinent while sleeping, and to keep you safe, healthy and engaged with your peers and friends in your community. A DSP is profession that requires compassion, empathy, training, skills, and the ability to build trust with the people you support. Imagine that in four short years you have had 83 DSPs funnel in and out of your life and your home. 83 different people for Kate to muster up all of her positive energy and tenacity, to once again start from the beginning, as she struggles to communicate with that person so trust can be developed because Kate needs help with her most personal human needs.

Two different times since my daughter has lived in her home, the loss and change in staff has caused my daughter such severe anxiety that she to refused to eat meals, chose to sleep over participating in favorite activities, and injured herself and lashed out at others. It was devastating for me to see her so defeated and depressed. These behaviors are representative of what happens when needs are not met, and as a result require so many more resources to undo all the harm that has been done.

Maine needs to finally recognize that DSP caregiving is an important and worthy profession, should make recruiting and retaining this workforce a priority, and finally acknowledge that this is not a minimum wage job. My worst fear is that if we do not act, more Direct Service Providers will no longer be able staff the homes and community support programs that serve Mainers with lifelong disabilities, like my daughter.

I could not be more grateful to the DSPs who work in my daughter's group home to support her and her five housemates. They deserve to her paid no less that 125% of minimum wage and with a 2 year rebasing requirement. Supporting LD 1573 is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah Riordan Dionne, Topsham
Community Connect Maine
deborah.r.dionne@gmail.com
207-522-4290

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

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 Deborah Riordan Dionne. I live in Topsham, and I'm a founding member of Community Connect Maine. My daughter has lifelong disabilities, with a specific diagnosis of cerebral palsy and an intellectual disability. Kate has lived in a group home in Brunswick for the past 19 years. I am writing my testimony in support of LD 1573.

I would like to begin by thanking Representative Jessica Fay for her steadfast leadership on the Long-term Workforce Commission, in addition to her sponsorship of several other bills that support the collaborative work of this commission, to include LD 1573. The recommendations of this well represented Long-term Workforce Commission should be applauded, as they fully addressed the crisis that exists across the spectrum of care. Unfortunately the pandemic caused LD 2109 to be derailed during the 129th Legislative session.

My daughter has overcome monumental obstacles in her 41 years of life. I am in awe of her spirit and tenacity to keep going and stay positive. I have no idea how she does what she does, and day after day. I would like for you to imagine living every day of your life without speech, the ability to write or type on a keyboard, the need to use a walker because without it you will lose your balance and fall face first, break bones, and shatter teeth, over and over again. In addition, you are dependent upon someone else to assist you with your most personal daily needs: showering, using the toilet, and cleaning you up after your body causes for you to be incontinent while sleeping, and to keep you safe, healthy and engaged with your peers and friends in your community. A DSP is profession that requires compassion, empathy, training, skills, and the ability to build trust with the people you support. Imagine that in four short years you have had 83 DSPs funnel in and out of your life and your home. 83 different people for Kate to muster up all of her positive energy and tenacity, to once again start from the beginning, as she struggles to communicate with that person so trust can be developed because Kate needs help with her most personal human needs.

Two different times since my daughter has lived in her home, the loss and change in staff has caused my daughter such severe anxiety that she to refused to eat meals, chose to sleep over participating in favorite activities, and injured herself and lashed out at others. It was devastating for me to see her so defeated and depressed. These behaviors are representative of what happens when needs are not met, and as a result require so many more resources to undo all the harm that has been done.

Maine needs to finally recognize that DSP caregiving is an important and worthy profession, should make recruiting and retaining this workforce a priority, and finally acknowledge that this is not a minimum wage job. My worst fear is that if we do not act, more Direct Service Providers will no longer be able staff the homes and community support programs that serve Mainers with lifelong disabilities, like my daughter.

I could not be more grateful to the DSPs who work in my daughter's group home to support her and her five housemates. They deserve to her paid no less that 125% of minimum wage and with a 2 year rebasing requirement. Supporting LD 1573 is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah Riordan Dionne, Topsham
Community Connect Maine
deborah.r.dionne@gmail.com
207-522-4290

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

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 Deborah Riordan Dionne. I live in Topsham, and I'm a founding member of Community Connect Maine. My daughter has lifelong disabilities, with a specific diagnosis of cerebral palsy and an intellectual disability. Kate has lived in a group home in Brunswick for the past 19 years. I am writing my testimony in support of LD 1573.

I would like to begin by thanking Representative Jessica Fay for her steadfast leadership on the Long-term Workforce Commission, in addition to her sponsorship of several other bills that support the collaborative work of this commission, to include LD 1573. The recommendations of this well represented Long-term Workforce Commission should be applauded, as they fully addressed the crisis that exists across the spectrum of care. Unfortunately the pandemic caused LD 2109 to be derailed during the 129th Legislative session.

My daughter has overcome monumental obstacles in her 41 years of life. I am in awe of her spirit and tenacity to keep going and stay positive. I have no idea how she does what she does, and day after day. I would like for you to imagine living every day of your life without speech, the ability to write or type on a keyboard, the need to use a walker because without it you will lose your balance and fall face first, break bones, and shatter teeth, over and over again. In addition, you are dependent upon someone else to assist you with your most personal daily needs: showering, using the toilet, and cleaning you up after your body causes for you to be incontinent while sleeping, and to keep you safe, healthy and engaged with your peers and friends in your community. A DSP is profession that requires compassion, empathy, training, skills, and the ability to build trust with the people you support. Imagine that in four short years you have had 83 DSPs funnel in and out of your life and your home. 83 different people for Kate to muster up all of her positive energy and tenacity, to once again start from the beginning, as she struggles to communicate with that person so trust can be developed because Kate needs help with her most personal human needs.

Two different times since my daughter has lived in her home, the loss and change in staff has caused my daughter such severe anxiety that she to refused to eat meals, chose to sleep over participating in favorite activities, and injured herself and lashed out at others. It was devastating for me to see her so defeated and depressed. These behaviors are representative of what happens when needs are not met, and as a result require so many more resources to undo all the harm that has been done.

Maine needs to finally recognize that DSP caregiving is an important and worthy profession, should make recruiting and retaining this workforce a priority, and finally acknowledge that this is not a minimum wage job. My worst fear is that if we do not act, more Direct Service Providers will no longer be able staff the homes and community support programs that serve Mainers with lifelong disabilities, like my daughter.

I could not be more grateful to the DSPs who work in my daughter's group home to support her and her five housemates. They deserve to her paid no less that 125% of minimum wage and with a 2 year rebasing requirement. Supporting LD 1573 is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah Riordan Dionne, Topsham
Community Connect Maine
deborah.r.dionne@gmail.com
207-522-4290

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

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 Deborah Riordan Dionne. I live in Topsham, and I'm a founding member of Community Connect Maine. My daughter has lifelong disabilities, with a specific diagnosis of cerebral palsy and an intellectual disability. Kate has lived in a group home in Brunswick for the past 19 years. I am writing my testimony in support of LD 1573.

I would like to begin by thanking Representative Jessica Fay for her steadfast leadership on the Long-term Workforce Commission, in addition to her sponsorship of several other bills that support the collaborative work of this commission, to include LD 1573. The recommendations of this well represented Long-term Workforce Commission should be applauded, as they fully addressed the crisis that exists across the spectrum of care. Unfortunately the pandemic caused LD 2109 to be derailed during the 129th Legislative session.

My daughter has overcome monumental obstacles in her 41 years of life. I am in awe of her spirit and tenacity to keep going and stay positive. I have no idea how she does what she does, and day after day. I would like for you to imagine living every day of your life without speech, the ability to write or type on a keyboard, the need to use a walker because without it you will lose your balance and fall face first, break bones, and shatter teeth, over and over again. In addition, you are dependent upon someone else to assist you with your most personal daily needs: showering, using the toilet, and cleaning you up after your body causes for you to be incontinent while sleeping, and to keep you safe, healthy and engaged with your peers and friends in your community. A DSP is profession that requires compassion, empathy, training, skills, and the ability to build trust with the people you support. Imagine that in four short years you have had 83 DSPs funnel in and out of your life and your home. 83 different people for Kate to muster up all of her positive energy and tenacity, to once again start from the beginning, as she struggles to communicate with that person so trust can be developed because Kate needs help with her most personal human needs.

Two different times since my daughter has lived in her home, the loss and change in staff has caused my daughter such severe anxiety that she to refused to eat meals, chose to sleep over participating in favorite activities, and injured herself and lashed out at others. It was devastating for me to see her so defeated and depressed. These behaviors are representative of what happens when needs are not met, and as a result require so many more resources to undo all the harm that has been done.

Maine needs to finally recognize that DSP caregiving is an important and worthy profession, should make recruiting and retaining this workforce a priority, and finally acknowledge that this is not a minimum wage job. My worst fear is that if we do not act, more Direct Service Providers will no longer be able staff the homes and community support programs that serve Mainers with lifelong disabilities, like my daughter.

I could not be more grateful to the DSPs who work in my daughter's group home to support

her and her five housemates. They deserve to her paid no less that 125% of minimum wage and with a 2 year rebasing requirement. Supporting LD 1573 is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah Riordan Dionne, Topsham
Community Connect Maine
deborah.r.dionne@gmail.com
207-522-4290

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

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 Deborah Riordan Dionne. I live in Topsham, and I'm a founding member of Community Connect Maine. My daughter has lifelong disabilities, with a specific diagnosis of cerebral palsy and an intellectual disability. Kate has lived in a group home in Brunswick for the past 19 years. I am writing my testimony in support of LD 1573.

I would like to begin by thanking Representative Jessica Fay for her steadfast leadership on the Long-term Workforce Commission, in addition to her sponsorship of several other bills that support the collaborative work of this commission, to include LD 1573. The recommendations of this well represented Long-term Workforce Commission should be applauded, as they fully addressed the crisis that exists across the spectrum of care. Unfortunately the pandemic caused LD 2109 to be derailed during the 129th Legislative session.

My daughter has overcome monumental obstacles in her 41 years of life. I am in awe of her spirit and tenacity to keep going and stay positive. I have no idea how she does what she does, and day after day. I would like for you to imagine living every day of your life without speech, the ability to write or type on a keyboard, the need to use a walker because without it you will lose your balance and fall face first, break bones, and shatter teeth, over and over again. In addition, you are dependent upon someone else to assist you with your most personal daily needs: showering, using the toilet, and cleaning you up after your body causes for you to be incontinent while sleeping, and to keep you safe, healthy and engaged with your peers and friends in your community. A DSP is profession that requires compassion, empathy, training, skills, and the ability to build trust with the people you support.   Imagine that in four short years you have had 83 DSPs funnel in and out of your life and your home. 83 different people for Kate to muster up all of her positive energy and tenacity, to once again start from the beginning, as she struggles to communicate with that person so trust can be developed because Kate needs help with her most personal human needs.

Two different times since my daughter has lived in her home, the loss and change in staff has caused my daughter such severe anxiety that she to refused to eat meals, chose to sleep over participating in favorite activities, and injured herself and lashed out at others.   It was devastating for me to see her so defeated and depressed. These behaviors are representative of what happens when needs are not met, and as a result require so many more resources to undo all the harm that has been done.

Maine needs to finally recognize that DSP caregiving is an important and worthy profession, should make recruiting and retaining this workforce a priority, and finally acknowledge that this is not a minimum wage job. My worst fear is that if we do not act, more Direct Service Providers will no longer be able staff the homes and community support programs that serve Mainers with lifelong disabilities, like my daughter.

I could not be more grateful to the DSPs who work in my daughter's group home to support her and her five housemates. They deserve to her paid no less that 125% of minimum wage and with a 2 year rebasing requirement. Supporting LD 1573 is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah Riordan Dionne, Topsham
Community Connect Maine
deborah.r.dionne@gmail.com
207-522-4290

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

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 Deborah Riordan Dionne. I live in Topsham, and I'm a founding member of Community Connect Maine. My daughter has lifelong disabilities, with a specific diagnosis of cerebral palsy and an intellectual disability. Kate has lived in a group home in Brunswick for the past 19 years. I am writing my testimony in support of LD 1573.

I would like to begin by thanking Representative Jessica Fay for her steadfast leadership on the Long-term Workforce Commission, in addition to her sponsorship of several other bills that support the collaborative work of this commission, to include LD 1573. The recommendations of this well represented Long-term Workforce Commission should be applauded, as they fully addressed the crisis that exists across the spectrum of care. Unfortunately the pandemic caused LD 2109 to be derailed during the 129th Legislative session.

My daughter has overcome monumental obstacles in her 41 years of life. I am in awe of her spirit and tenacity to keep going and stay positive. I have no idea how she does what she does, and day after day. I would like for you to imagine living every day of your life without speech, the ability to write or type on a keyboard, the need to use a walker because without it you will lose your balance and fall face first, break bones, and shatter teeth, over and over again. In addition, you are dependent upon someone else to assist you with your most personal daily needs: showering, using the toilet, and cleaning you up after your body causes for you to be incontinent while sleeping, and to keep you safe, healthy and engaged with your peers and friends in your community. A DSP is profession that requires compassion, empathy, training, skills, and the ability to build trust with the people you support. Imagine that in four short years you have had 83 DSPs funnel in and out of your life and your home. 83 different people for Kate to muster up all of her positive energy and tenacity, to once again start from the beginning, as she struggles to communicate with that person so trust can be developed because Kate needs help with her most personal human needs.

Two different times since my daughter has lived in her home, the loss and change in staff has caused my daughter such severe anxiety that she to refused to eat meals, chose to sleep over participating in favorite activities, and injured herself and lashed out at others. It was devastating for me to see her so defeated and depressed. These behaviors are representative of what happens when needs are not met, and as a result require so many more resources to undo all the harm that has been done.

Maine needs to finally recognize that DSP caregiving is an important and worthy profession, should make recruiting and retaining this workforce a priority, and finally acknowledge that this is not a minimum wage job. My worst fear is that if we do not act, more Direct Service Providers will no longer be able staff the homes and community support programs that serve Mainers with lifelong disabilities, like my daughter.

I could not be more grateful to the DSPs who work in my daughter's group home to support her and her five housemates. They deserve to her paid no less that 125% of minimum wage and with a 2 year rebasing requirement. Supporting LD 1573 is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah Riordan Dionne, Topsham
Community Connect Maine
deborah.r.dionne@gmail.com
207-522-4290