



Testimony of Brenda Peluso on Behalf of Maine's Essential Care & Support Workforce Partnership

Delivered on March 25, 2025

Opposed to LD 206 - An Act to Protect Maine Businesses by Eliminating the Automatic Cost-of-living Adjustment to the Minimum Hourly Wage

Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee of Labor,

My name is Brenda Peluso, and I am the coordinator for [Maine's Essential Care & Support Workforce Partnership](#), a broad coalition of employers, workers, and concerned individuals working to increase access to quality direct care and support in Maine by changing the way we value workers and the work they do.

I am testifying against LD 206 because indexing the minimum wage to an inflation index, as is done in thirteen (13) other states and thirty-nine (39) cities and counties nationally¹, reduces the burden of rising prices for low-wage workers and their families²; has a minimal impact on inflation, if any at all³; and is the backbone for our decade's long efforts to grow and retain well-trained, compassionate, and highly effective essential care and support workers.

Essential care & support workers are those workers who provide services that allow Maine people to live with dignity and wellbeing. Because our direct care workforce is already strained, many Maine people who need assistance with activities of daily living are facing serious challenges, including worsened physical and mental health, higher risk of falls and injuries, hospitalization, neglect, institutionalization, and even homelessness and death.

Maine's commitment to helping grow the essential care and support workforce is starting to finally show some promising but limited success. Predictable and consistent raises in the minimum wage are a critical part of this success. I urge you to reject LD 206 and continue to support Maine's frontline workers.

Thank you for all your careful consideration of the priorities in front of you,

Brenda Peluso, bpeluso@mainecouncilonaging.org

¹ "Raises from Coast to Coast in 2025," National Employment Law Project, December 9, 2024, <https://www.nelp.org/insights-research/raises-from-coast-to-coast-in-2025/>

² "Tying minimum-wage increases to inflation," The Economic Policy Institute (EPI), September 6, 2022, <https://www.epi.org/blog/tying-minimum-wage-increases-to-inflation-as-12-states-do-will-lift-up-low-wage-workers-and-their-families-across-the-country/>

³ "Does increasing the minimum wage lead to higher prices?" The W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, July 2016, <https://www.upjohn.org/research-highlights/does-increasing-minimum-wage-lead-higher-prices>