



Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine
The unified voice for Maine's community behavioral health providers

Malory Otteson Shaughnessy, Executive Director

Testimony Neither For Nor Against LD 607
An Act To Restore Overtime Protections for Maine Workers

Sponsored by Rep. Talbot Ross

3.22.2021

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Good morning Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor & Housing. I am Malory Shaughnessy, a resident of Westbrook, and the Executive Director of the Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services. The Alliance is the statewide association representing the majority of Maine's safety net community based mental health and substance use treatment providers. The Alliance advocates for the implementation of sound policies and evidence-based practices that serve to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our behavioral health care system.

On behalf of the Alliance, this testimony is Neither For Nor Against LD 607, An Act To Restore Overtime Protections for Maine Workers. This testimony is to highlight some issues that need to be considered.

The member providers of the Alliance are businesses like any other. They employ upwards of 4,000 employees across the state of Maine, providing services to upwards of 100,000 Maine men, women and children. They want to provide their employees with good wages, good working conditions, benefits, and opportunity for advancement and growth.

They want to attract the best, and retain them after they have invested in them with trainings, education, and support. But unlike other businesses, they provide a service that is tied to a state mandated and controlled reimbursement rate. They cannot change this on their own, they cannot shift it up and down as costs increase or decrease. They are in a system of price controls beyond their ability to alter.

I am submitting this testimony to highlight this issue and the impacts on these businesses, these providers of needed services to Maine people, when changes such as this legislation are implemented without thought to the repercussions on the sustainability of these programs, the impacts on staff, the impacts on Maine people in need. This cannot continue.

The members of the Alliance support overtime protections and decent wages, but you cannot pass legislation like this without addressing these unintended consequences. Too many people will be harmed.

We urge the committee to amend this legislation to direct the Office of MaineCare Services to adjust reimbursement rates accordingly if this legislation is to pass.

We urge this committee to also consider the bigger picture and to support changes to the MaineCare Reimbursement policies and rules to assure that any unfunded mandates regarding enhancements to workers benefits be reviewed and accounted for in some automatic process.

Thank you for hearing our concerns and I would be happy to get any data that you might need.