



LD 182, An Act To Expand the Definition of "Essential Worker" To Include Retail and Food Service Workers

March 29, 2021

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Laurie Belden and I serve as the executive director of the Home Care & Hospice Alliance of Maine -- a membership organization representing home care, home health care and hospice providers across the State. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony neither for nor against LD 182.

The Alliance is a network of home care and hospice providers across our State delivering home-based care to older adults and disabled individuals of all ages - allowing them to stay in their home and community. Annually, our provider members deliver care to more than 45,000 clients in their residences across Maine, traveling more than 20 million miles. Collectively, home care, home health care and hospice members employ more than 15,000 staff –making our sector of the healthcare continuum a large contributor to Maine’s economic growth and prosperity.

We have reviewed the amendment provided by Representative Paulhus and while we are supportive of the intent to better define the term “essential worker,” we urge the committee to include home care and hospice workers in any such definition. Currently, the amendment to LD 182 includes as essential workers the people employed by hospitals and similar inpatient facilities, group homes and residential facilities, and biomedical, life science, behavioral health, health care, dental care and long-term service and supports providers. Given the important role they play in the health and safety of aging adults and individuals with disabilities receiving care in their homes, it is critical that home care, home health care and hospice organizations, and the people they employ, are included in this legislation.

We thank the committee for considering this information and urge you to please include home care and hospice workers in this or any other effort to define the term “essential worker.”

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